まんがで読破

おくのほそ道

松尾芭蕉・作

イースト・プレス

READ IT
THROUGH MANGA

まんがで読破

おくのほそ道

THE NARROW ROAD
TO THE DEEP NORTH

松尾芭蕉・作

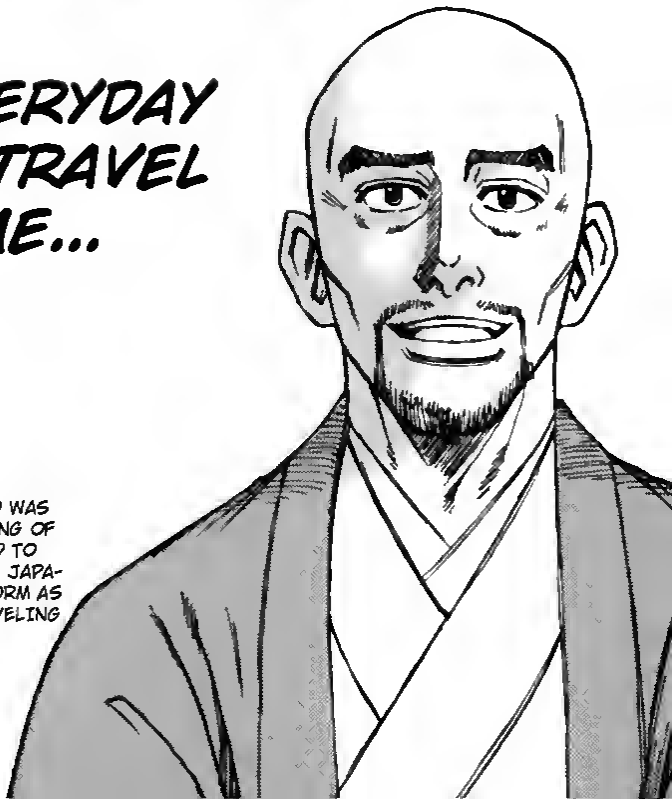
BY BASHO MATSUO

THE NARROW ROAD
TO THE DEEP NORTH

おくのほそ道

THE MAIN CHARACTERS

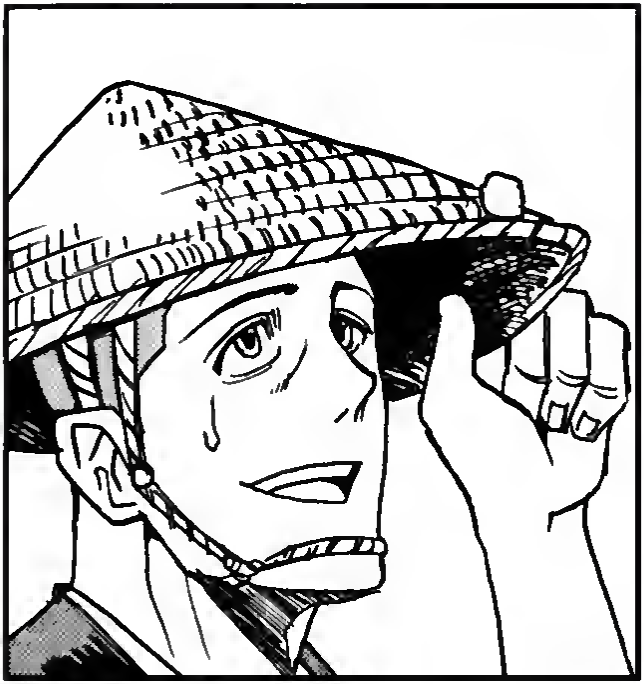
TRAVEL EVERYDAY AND MAKE TRAVEL ONE'S HOME...



BASHO MATSUO

松尾芭蕉

HE IS A JAPANESE POET WHO WAS ACTIVE DURING THE BEGINNING OF THE EDO PERIOD. HE STRIVED TO ELEVATE *HAIKAI*, A GENRE OF JAPANESE POEMS, INTO AN ART FORM AS HE SPENT HIS LIFETIME TRAVELING AND ESTABLISHING HIS OWN UNIQUE POETIC STYLE.



SORA KAWAI

河合曾良

ONE OF BASHO'S DISCIPLES. HE ACCOMPANIED BASHO IN HIS TRAVEL TO THE DEEP NORTH.

GOZAEMON THE BUDDHA

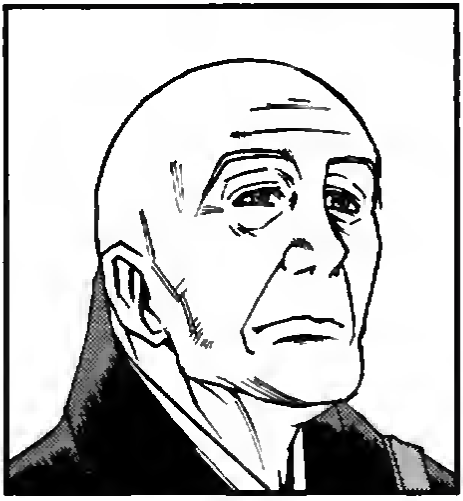
仏五左衛門

SEIFU SUZUKI

鈴木清風

TOSAI

等裁



SAIGYO HOSHI

西行法師

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EDO
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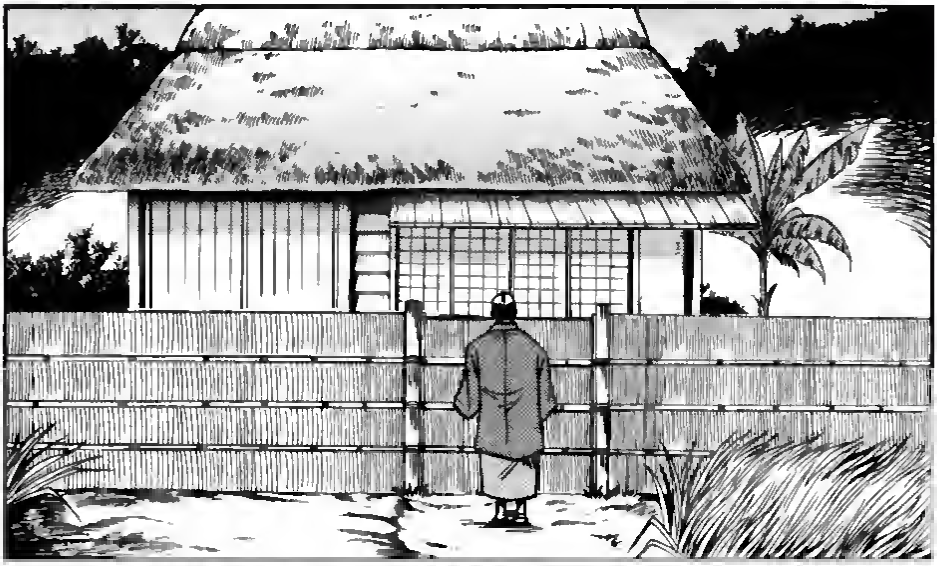


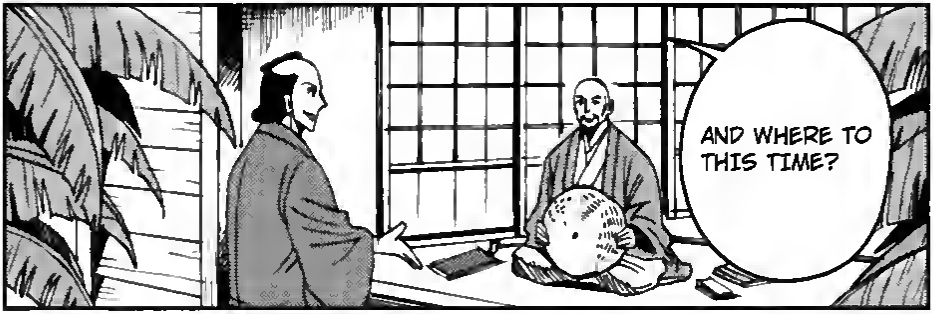
MASTER BASHO!

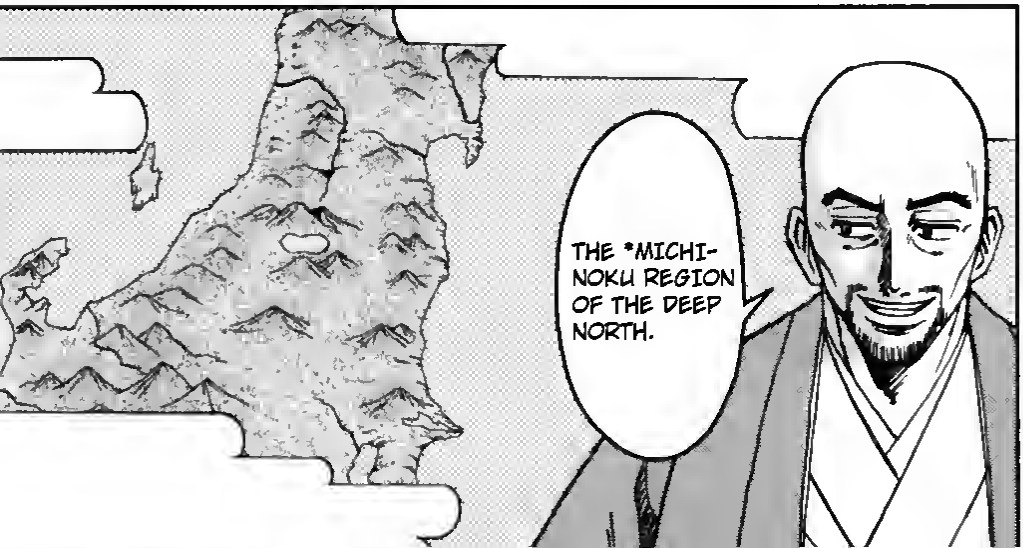
キィ...
CREEEK

AH, WELCOME!
HUH? YOU'RE PREPARING FOR A TRAVEL?
YES.
I MUST MEND MY UNDERPANTS AND REPLACE THE STRINGS ON MY BAMBOO HAT...
OH, AND I MUSTN'T FORGET TO PACK MY *KAMIKO COAT AND TABI SOCKS AS WELL.
SIGH
YOU JUST RETURNED FROM YOUR *TRAVEL TO THE WEST...
AND YOU'RE GETTING READY TO LEAVE AGAIN?

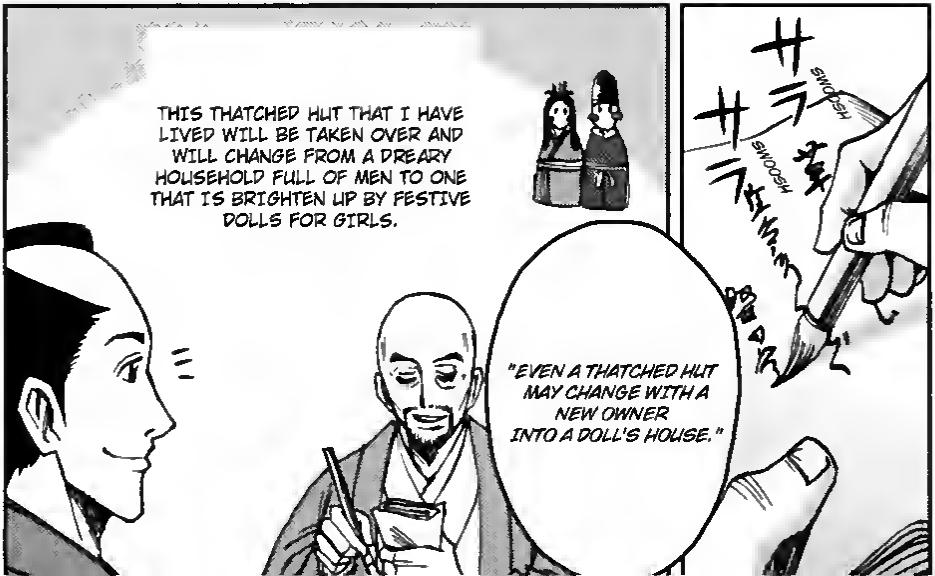
* KAMIKO A SPECIAL PAPER-MADE KIMONO THAT IS STRONG AGAINST THE COLD.

* TRAVEL TO THE WEST. THE CURRENT KANSAI REGION. IT MARKS THE JOURNEY FROM EDO TO AKASHI, OR THE CURRENT HYOGO PREFECTURE.



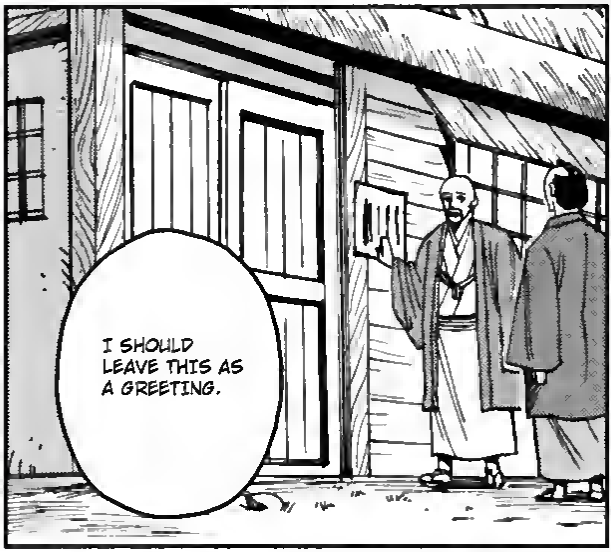


* TOHO: A CHINESE POET OF THE TANG DYNASTY
* SAIGYO HOSHI: A POET/MONK OF THE LATE HEIAN PERIOD
* MICHINOKU: THE REGION COMBINING THE MUTSU PROVINCE AND DEWA PROVINCE. CURRENT TOHOKU REGION


THIS THATCHED HUT THAT I HAVE LIVED WILL BE TAKEN OVER AND WILL CHANGE FROM A DREARY HOUSEHOLD FULL OF MEN TO ONE THAT IS BRIGHTEN UP BY FESTIVE DOLLS FOR GIRLS.
"EVEN A THATCHED HUT MAY CHANGE WITH A NEW OWNER INTO A DOLL'S HOUSE."
HSOOHS
HSOOHS

* *UTAMAKURA* LITERALLY 'SONG PILLOW': FAMOUS AND HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT LOCATIONS OF THE COUNTRY APPEARING IN OLD JAPANESE POEMS

I'M SURE THIS *BASHO* BANANA PLANT WOULD LIKE IT TO BE MORE LIVELY AROUND HERE.
YES, PERHAPS SO.


I SHOULD LEAVE THIS AS A GREETING.

NOW I CAN LEAVE TO TRAVEL ANYTIME.
THAT'S ALL YOU REALLY THINK ABOUT.
OF COURSE.

おくのほそ道
THE NARROW ROAD TO THE DEEP NORTH
THE MONTHS AND DAYS ARE THE TRAVELERS OF ETERNITY...
TO ME, TRAVELING ITSELF IS MY LIFE.

旅立ち
DEPARTURE
THANK YOU EVERYONE FOR COMING DOWN TO SEE ME OFF.
じわ…
SOBS
MASTER...
SORA...
I WILL BE GOING NOW.
PLEASE...PLEASE COME BACK SAFE!!
わっ
WAAAA

IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE IF YOU THINK ABOUT THE FEELINGS OF THE ONES WHO WOULD BE LEFT HERE!
I DISAGREE!
RIGHT, SORA?
IT'S NOT SOMETHING TO CRY ABOUT.
OH, STOP THAT.
TAKE GOOD CARE OF MASTER, SORA!
PLEASE STAY HEALTHY ALONG YOUR JOURNEY!
ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN DURING OUR JOURNEY... EVERYONE'S TRULY WORRIED ABOUT US!!
MICHINOKU IS FAR AWAY AND WE DO NOT HAVE PEOPLE WE CAN RELY ON.
SOBS
"SPRING IS PASSING BY! BIRDS ARE WEEPING AND THE EYES OF FISH FILL WITH TEARS."
JUST LIKE HOW BIRDS AND FISH ARE SADDENED BY THE PASSING OF SPRING, MY DISCIPLES WERE SADDENED BY MY DEPARTURE.
HAVE A LITTLE SYMPATHY FOR THEM, PLEASE!

THIS WORLD IS EPHEMERAL LIKE DREAMS AND ILLUSIONS, AND ALL THOUGH KNOWING THAT THERE IS NO NEED FOR TEARS...
THINKING ABOUT THE LONG JOURNEY THAT IS AHEAD OF ME MADE IT HARDER FOR ME TO NOT LAMENT OVER THE PARTING.

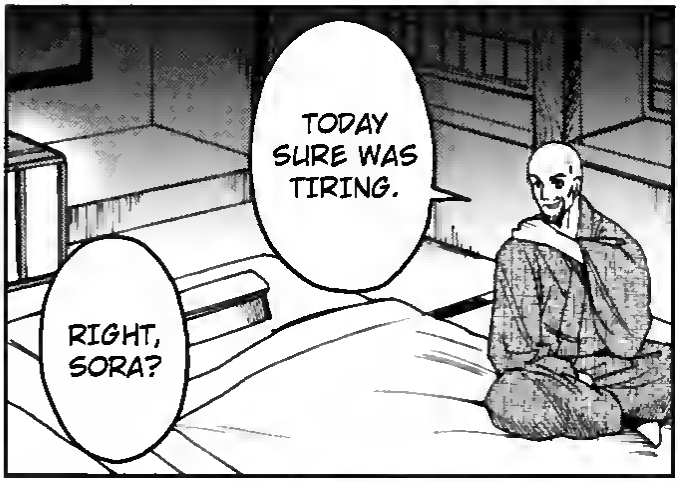
HARDSHIPS ALWAYS ACCOMPANY A JOURNEY, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE HARDSHIPS FACED BY THE MEN WHO ARE LEFT TO WAIT...

THE LONG JOURNEY TO MICHINOKU THAT I HAVE DECIDED ON A WHIM...
I ALREADY HAD IN MIND THE HARDSHIPS THAT I MAY FACE.

YOUR LUGGAGE IS WEIGHING HARD ON YOUR SHOULDERS.
PERHAPS YOU HAVE TOO MANY THINGS?
YES...

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MASTER?
HM?

LESSER TO CARRY THE BETTER, BUT...
IT CANNOT BE HELPED...
OFF WE GO
HOWEVER...
CLOTHES
INK AND BRUSH...
RAIN GEAR
...AND ALSO EVERY-ONE'S FAREWELL GIFTS.
I CANNOT THROW AWAY ANY ONE OF THEM.
HOWEVER, THE JOURNEY WAS FOUND TO BE FAR MORE DIFFICULT THAN ANTICI-PATED...
...THAT AT THE END OF THE DAY, WE'VE ONLY REACHED TO THE POST TOWN OF SOKA.

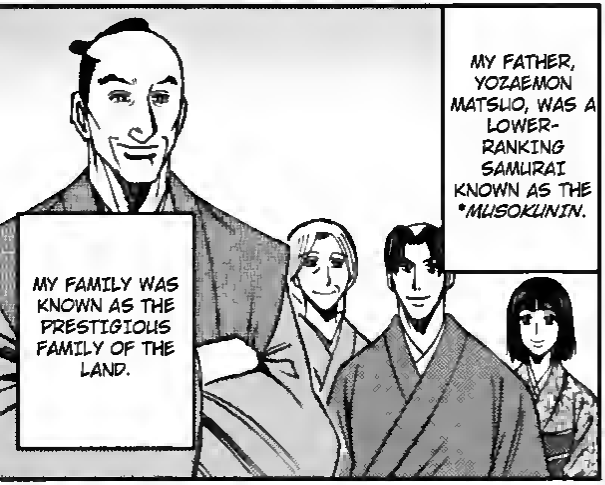

TODAY SURE WAS TIRING.
RIGHT, SORA?

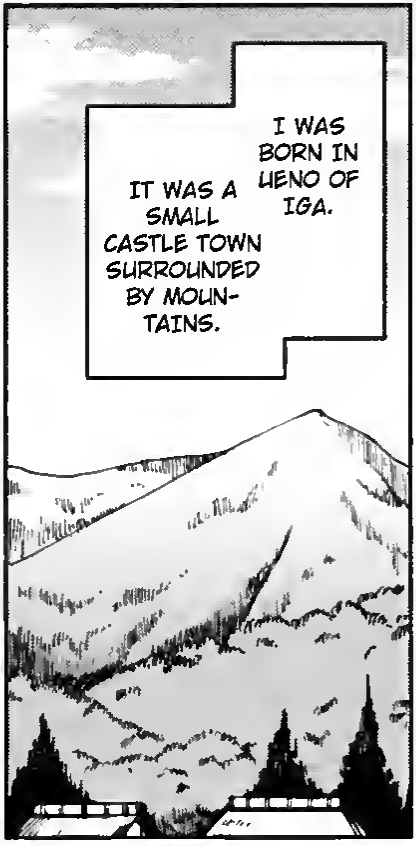
TAP
TAP
DEAR ME...

CLAK

ZZZ
ZZZ

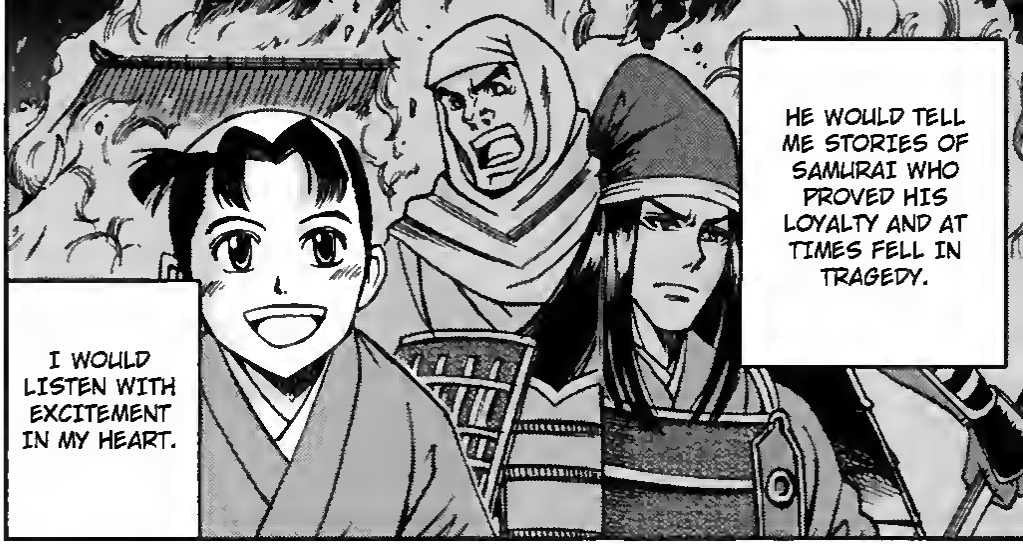
HE'S FAST ASLEEP.
HAHAHA

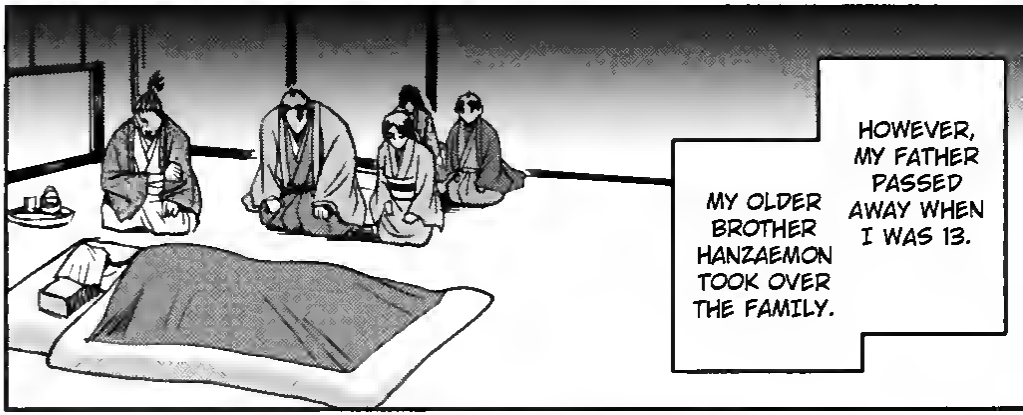

MY FATHER, YOZAEMON MATSUO, WAS A LOWER-RANKING SAMURAI KNOWN AS THE *MUSOKUNIN.
MY FAMILY WAS KNOWN AS THE PRESTIGIOUS FAMILY OF THE LAND.

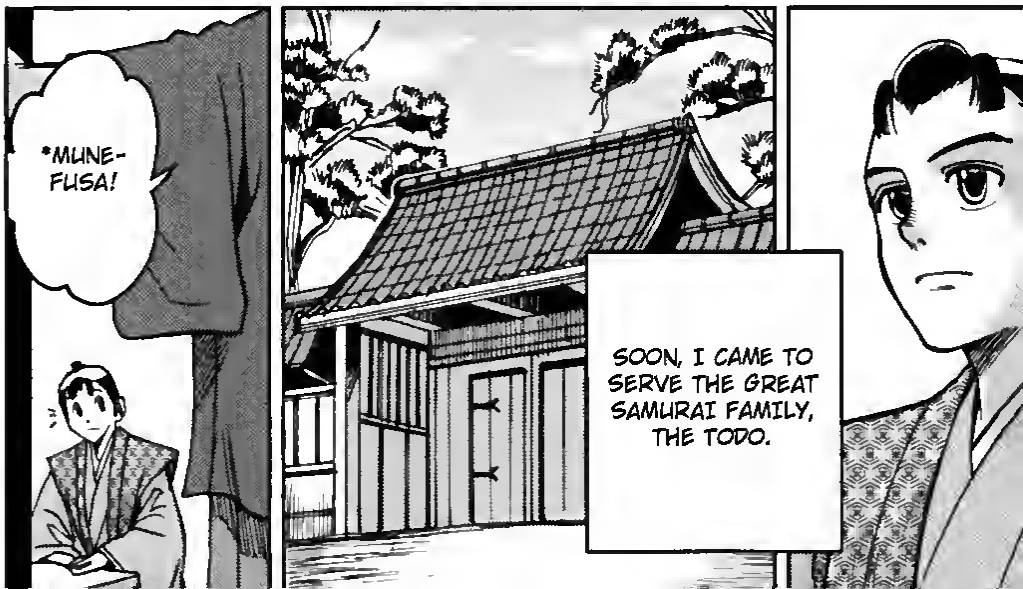


* SECOND YEAR OF GENROKU ERA: 1689 CE. THE MID EDO PERIOD.

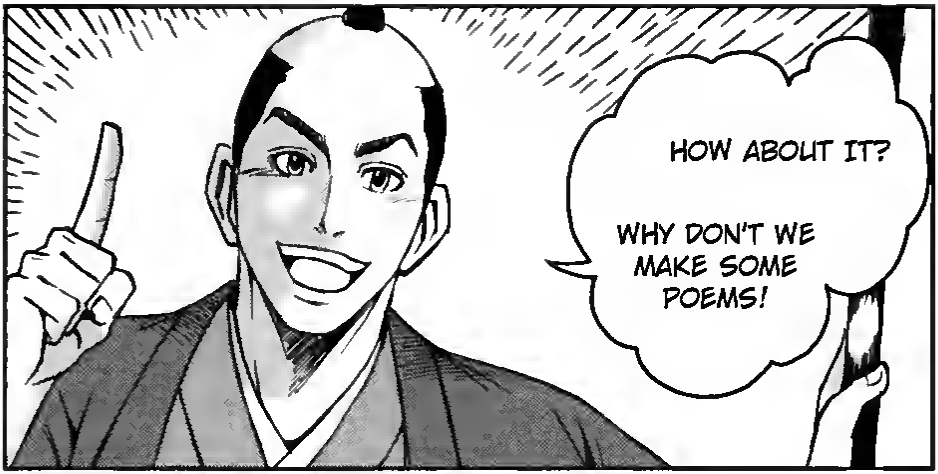
* MUSOKUNIN: A LOWER-RANKING SAMURAI, NOT OWNING ANY TERRITORY.


I WOULD LISTEN WITH EXCITEMENT IN MY HEART.
HE WOULD TELL ME STORIES OF SAMURAI WHO PROVED HIS LOYALTY AND AT TIMES FELL IN TRAGEDY.

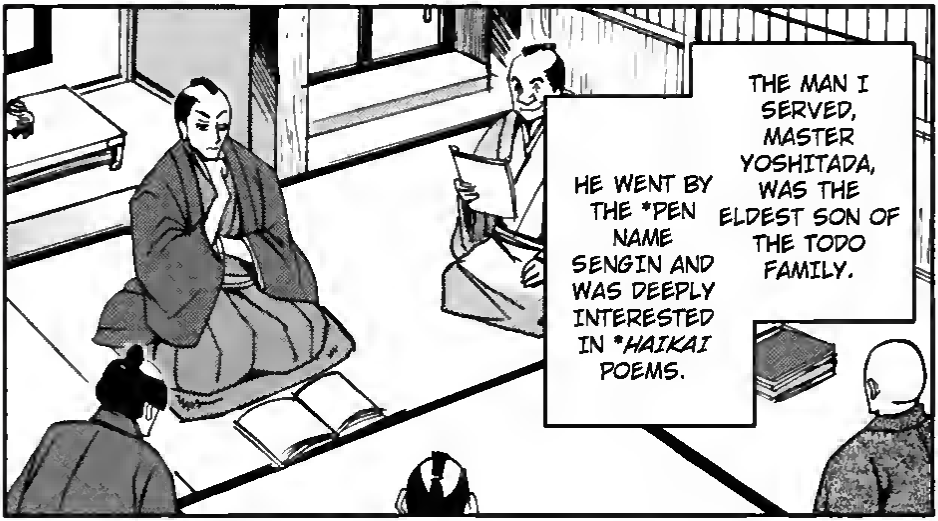




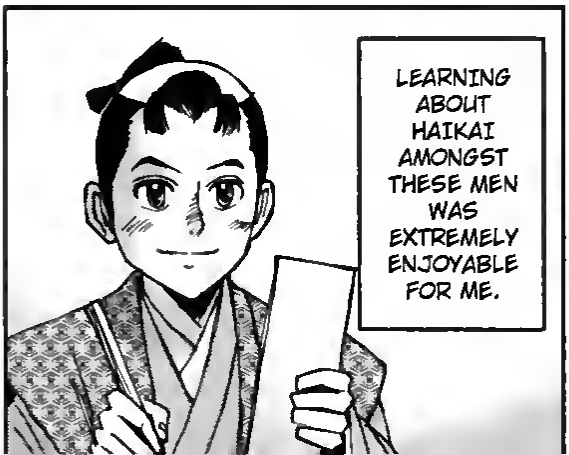
* MUNEFUSA: BASHO'S NAME AT THE TIME.

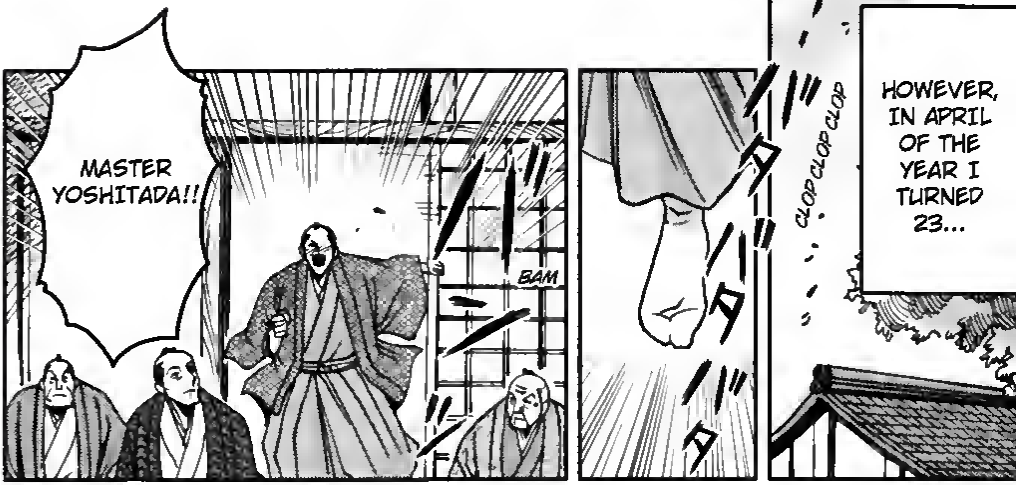


* PEN NAME: KNOWN AS *HAIGOU* IN JAPANESE, POETS WERE KNOWN WITH THEIR PEN NAMES.

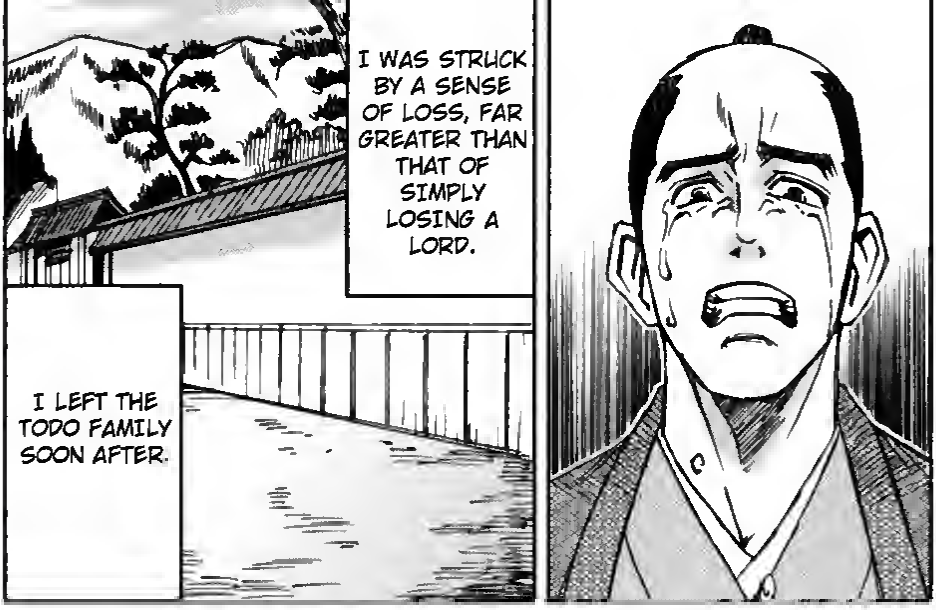

THE MAN I SERVED, MASTER YOSHITADA, WAS THE ELDEST SON OF THE TODO FAMILY.
HE WENT BY THE *PEN NAME SENGIN AND WAS DEEPLY INTERESTED IN *HAIKAI POEMS.

* *HAIKAI*: ABBREVIATION FOR "*HAIKAI NO RENGA*." THE FIRST VERSE OF THE *RENGA* (COUNTING 5,7,5 MORAS) IS CALLED *HOKKU* AND IS CURRENTLY KNOWN AS *HAIKU*.



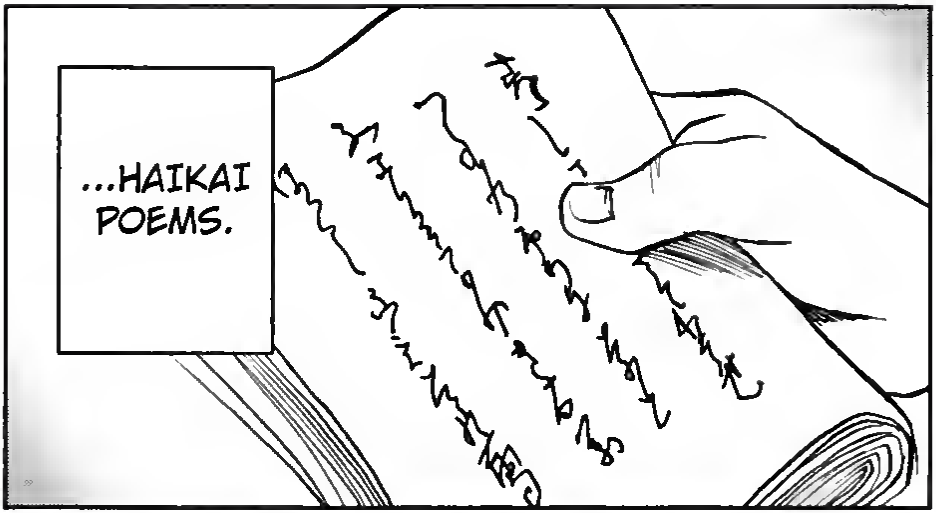

MASTER YOSHITADA!!
BAM
CLOP CLOP CLOP
HOWEVER, IN APRIL OF THE YEAR I TURNED 23...

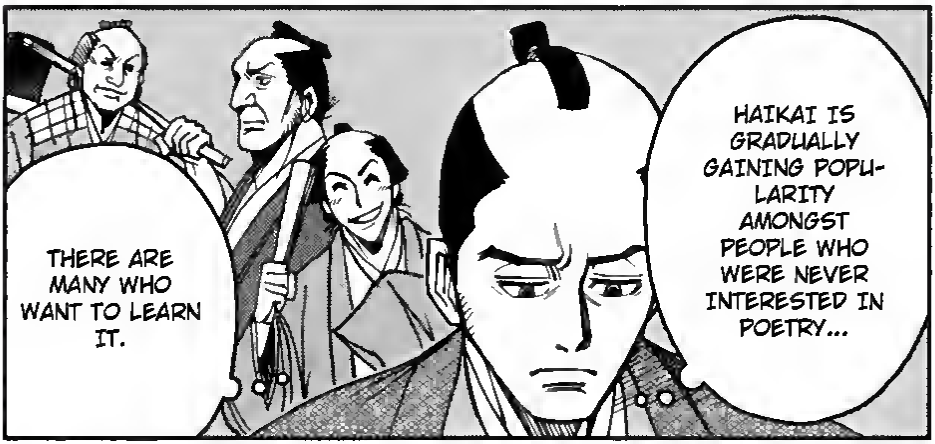
MASTER YOSHITADA SUDDENLY DIED AT THE YOUNG AGE OF 25.


I WAS STRUCK BY A SENSE OF LOSS, FAR GREATER THAN THAT OF SIMPLY LOSING A LORD.
I LEFT THE TODO FAMILY SOON AFTER.

FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS, EVERYDAY WAS FILLED WITH ANGUISH.

THE ONLY THING LEFT FOR ME WAS...
NEITHER DID I HAVE THE COURAGE TO ENTER MONK-HOOD.
I HAD NO WAY TO SERVE AS A SAMURAI.


...HAIKAI POEMS.

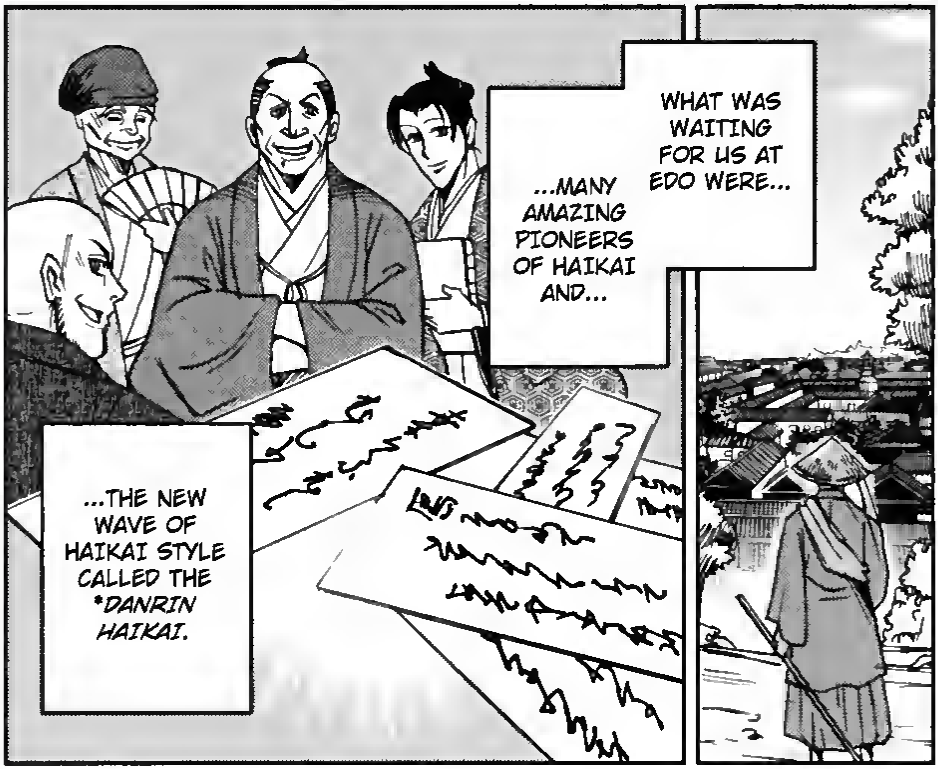

THERE ARE MANY WHO WANT TO LEARN IT.
HAIKAI IS GRADUALLY GAINING POPULARITY AMONGST PEOPLE WHO WERE NEVER INTERESTED IN POETRY...

...NO
CLUTCH
I MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE IT ON MY OWN AS A HAIKAI MASTER.
LUCKILY, I LEARNED HOW TO WRITE HAIKAI AND HAVE EXPERIENCE WITH LINKED VERSES...

THAT IS ALL I HAVE.
THAT IS THE ONLY PATH LEFT FOR ME!

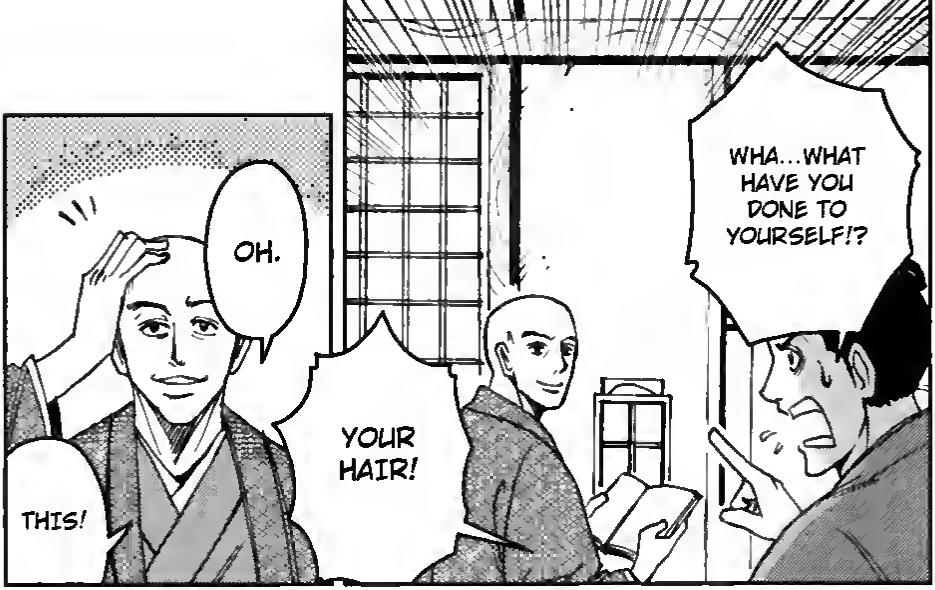
THE NEW YEAR I TURNED 29, I WROTE UP A SELF-SELECTED COLLECTION OF POEMS TITLED, THE SEASHELL GAME.

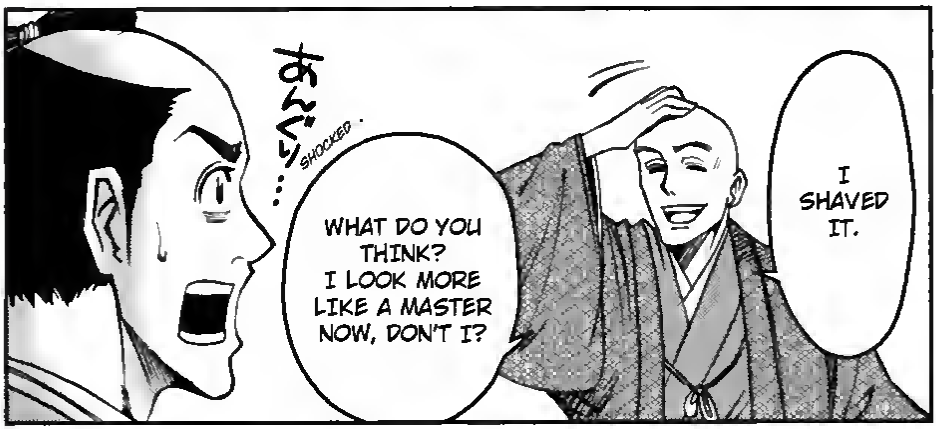
THE SAME YEAR IN FEBRUARY, I LEFT TO EDO.
I DEDICATED IT TO THE UENO TENMANGU SHRINE AND STRENGTHENED MY DETERMINATION TO TAKE THE PATH OF A POET.


WHAT WAS WAITING FOR US AT EDO WERE...
...MANY AMAZING PIONEERS OF HAIKAI AND...
...THE NEW WAVE OF HAIKAI STYLE CALLED THE *DANRIN HAIKAI.

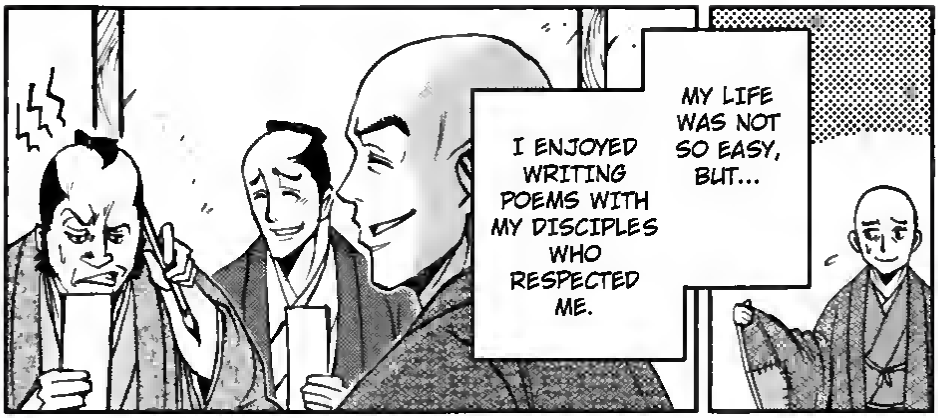
* DANRIN HAIKAI: THE "DANRIN STYLE" HAIKAI LED BY SO-IN NISHIYAMA. THE PARTICULAR STYLE FOCUSED ON THE PURSUIT OF HUMOR AND WORD PLAY.

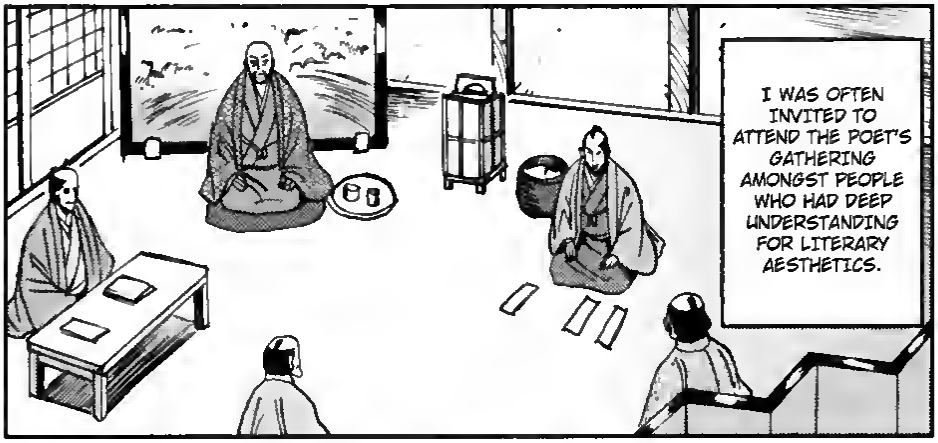
I CHANGED MY PEN NAME TO TOSEI AND IMMERSED MYSELF IN POETRY.
HUH!?
MASTER...
THERE YOU ARE!
MASTER TOSEI!
カラ
CHAK...


WHA...WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO YOURSELF!?
OH.
YOUR HAIR!
THIS!


I SHAVED IT.
あぐぐ…
SHOCKED
WHAT DO YOU THINK? I LOOK MORE LIKE A MASTER NOW, DON'T I?

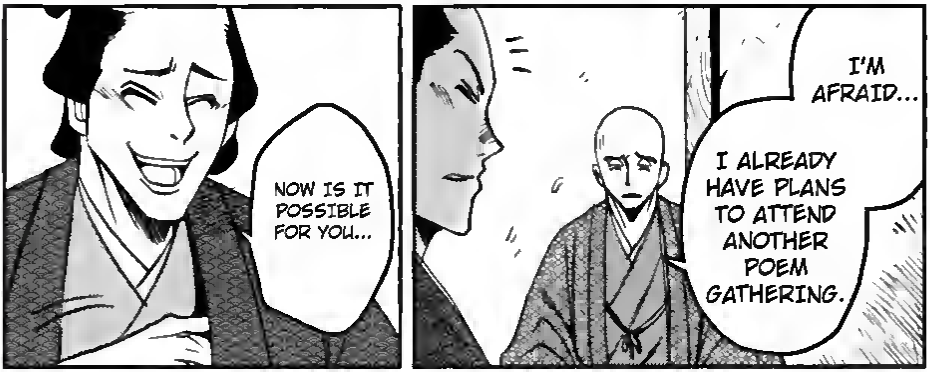
FEW YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE WE CAME TO EDO...
I GAINED DISCIPLES AND I HAVE DEVELOPED A REPUTATION AS A HAIKAI MASTER.

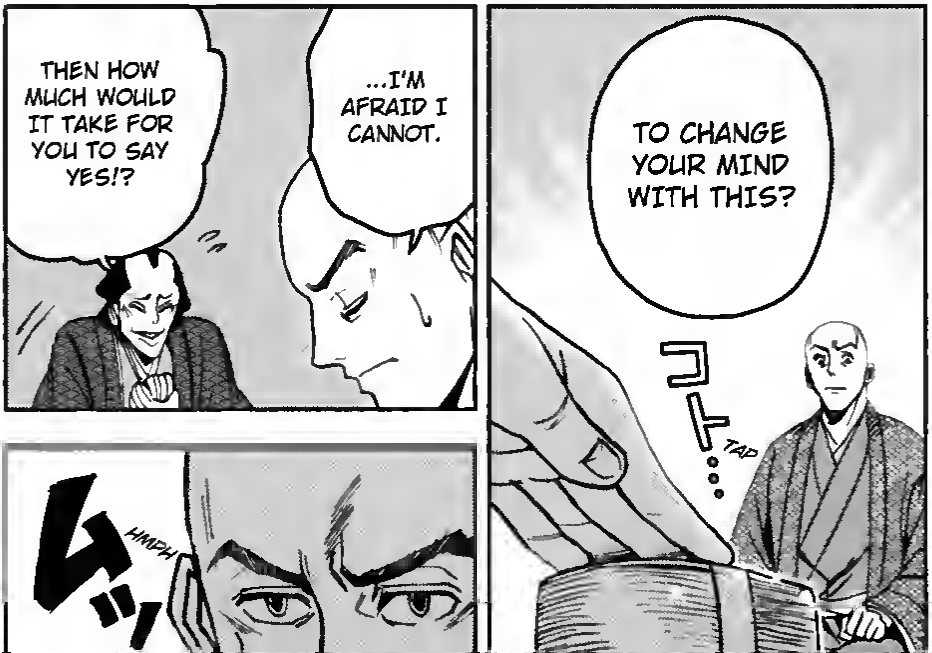

I ENJOYED WRITING POEMS WITH MY DISCIPLES WHO RESPECTED ME.
MY LIFE WAS NOT SO EASY, BUT...


I WAS OFTEN INVITED TO ATTEND THE POET'S GATHERING AMONGST PEOPLE WHO HAD DEEP UNDERSTANDING FOR LITERARY AESTHETICS.

HOWEVER...
MASTER!
BEFORE I REALIZED, I WAS A WELL-KNOWN HAIKAI MASTER EVEN IN EDO.

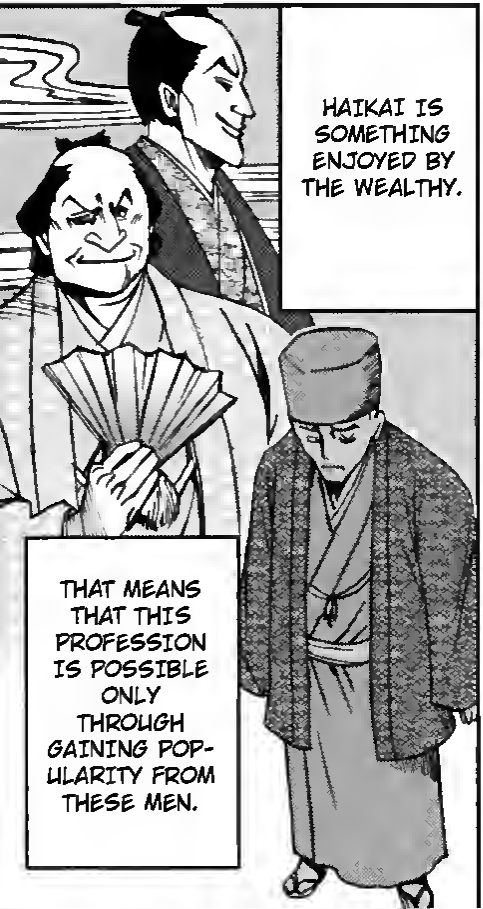
I WOULD LIKE YOU TO ATTEND THE GATHERING HOSTED BY MY MASTER...
YES.
THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW...

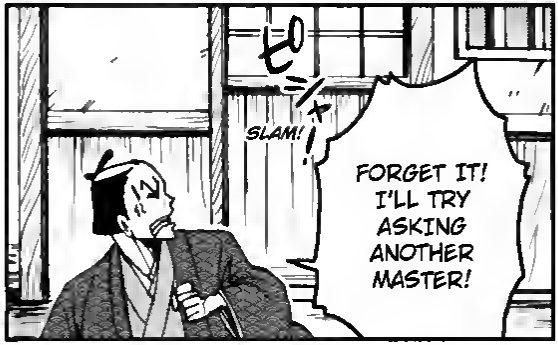

NOW IS IT POSSIBLE FOR YOU...
I'M AFRAID...
I ALREADY HAVE PLANS TO ATTEND ANOTHER POEM GATHERING.


THEN HOW MUCH WOULD IT TAKE FOR YOU TO SAY YES!?
...I'M AFRAID I CANNOT.
TO CHANGE YOUR MIND WITH THIS?
コト
TAP...
ムッ
HMPH

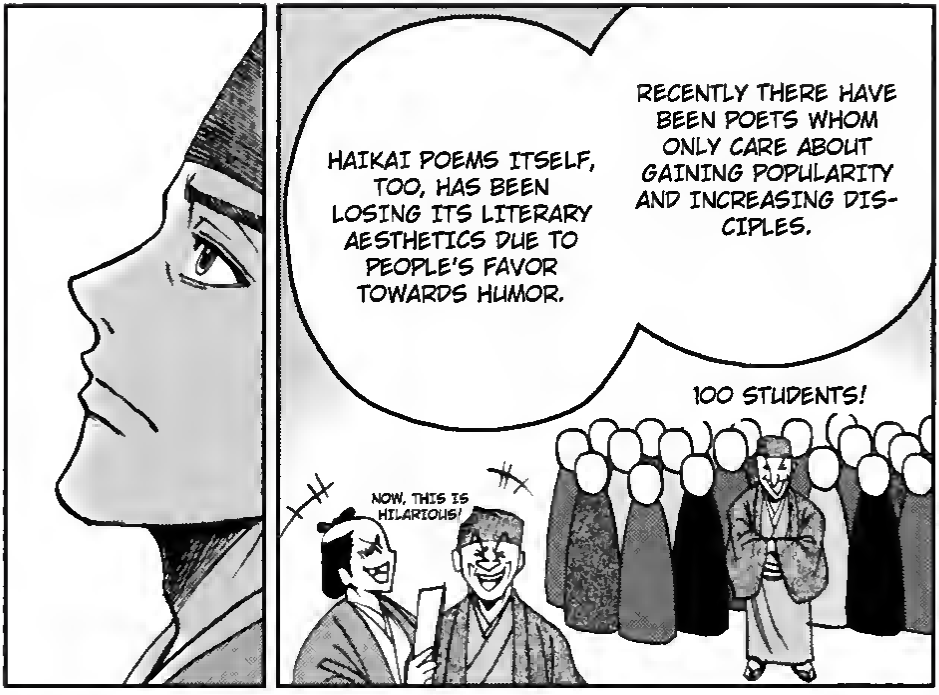
...HOW DARE YOU! DON'T YOU KNOW THAT...
...YOUR OCCUPATION IS NOTHING WITHOUT PUBLIC FAVOR!

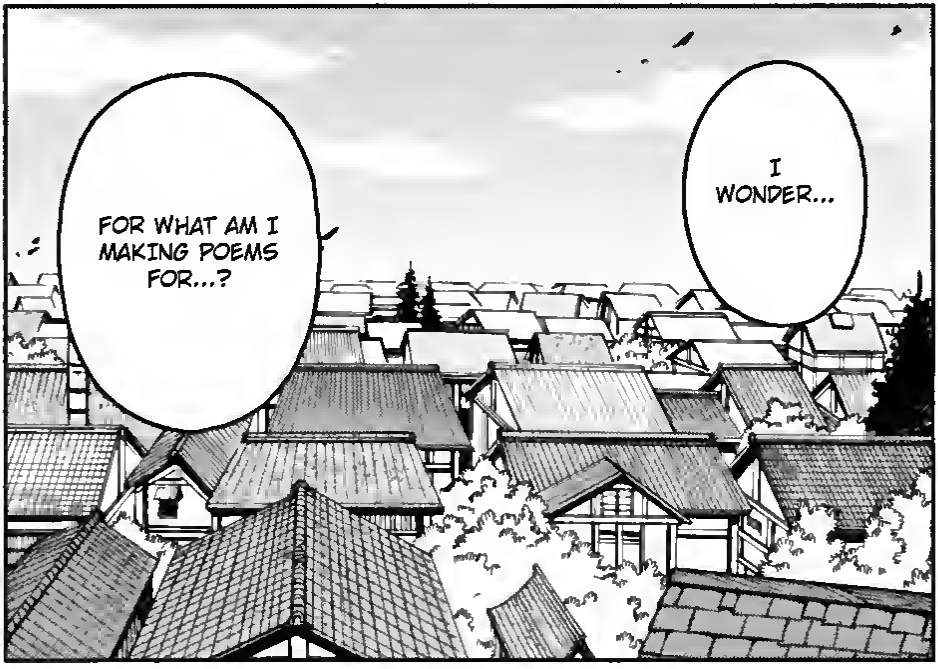
IT'S NOT THE MATTER OF MONEY!
PLEASE TAKE YOUR LEAVE!
WHUMP
AH... HEY!?

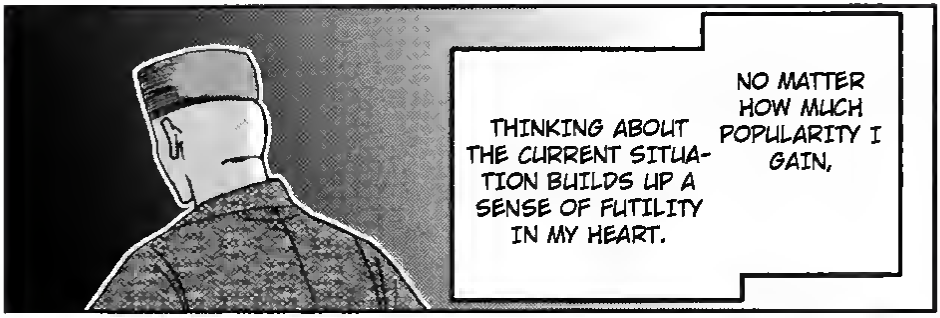

HAIKAI IS SOMETHING ENJOYED BY THE WEALTHY.
THAT MEANS THAT THIS PROFESSION IS POSSIBLE ONLY THROUGH GAINING POPULARITY FROM THESE MEN.

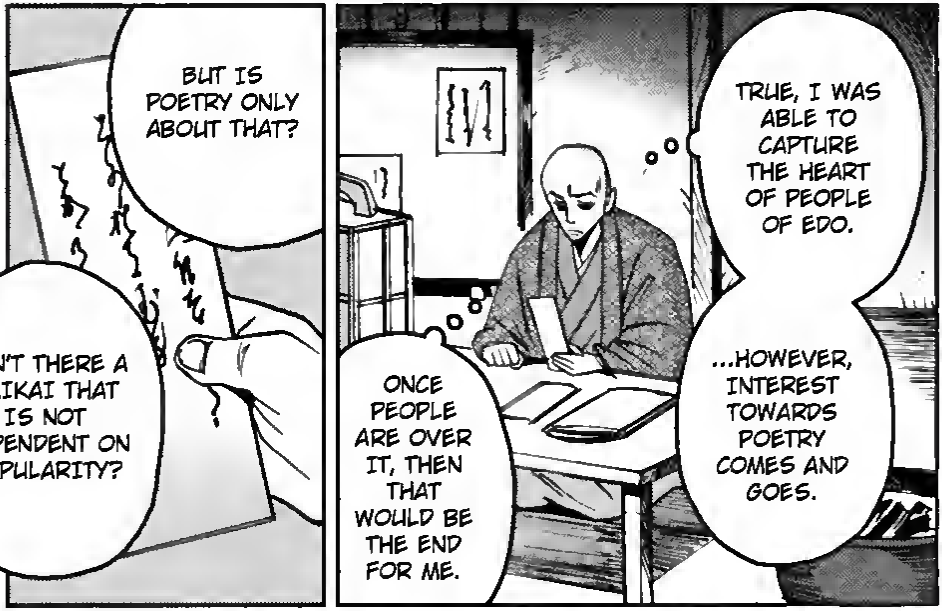

SLAM!
FORGET IT! I'LL TRY ASKING ANOTHER MASTER!

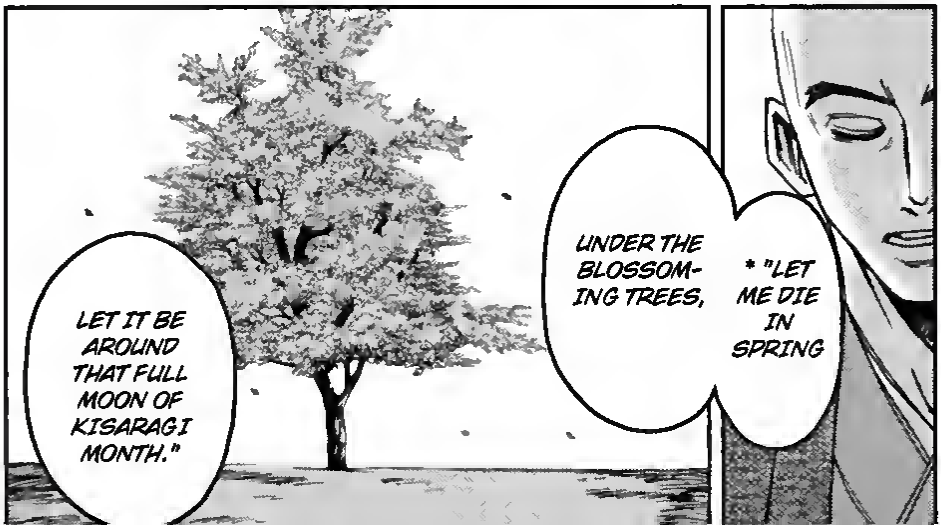
BEING A HAIKAI MASTER IS ALL ABOUT PUBLIC FAVOR...
IT CAN'T BE HELPED FOR IT TO BE KNOWN AS SUCH.
HMPH!
SUCH A STUBBORN MAN!


RECENTLY THERE HAVE BEEN POETS WHOM ONLY CARE ABOUT GAINING POPULARITY AND INCREASING DISCIPLES.
HAIKAI POEMS ITSELF, TOO, HAS BEEN LOSING ITS LITERARY AESTHETICS DUE TO PEOPLE'S FAVOR TOWARDS HUMOR.
100 STUDENTS!
NOW, THIS IS HILARIOUS!


I WONDER...
FOR WHAT AM I MAKING POEMS FOR...?



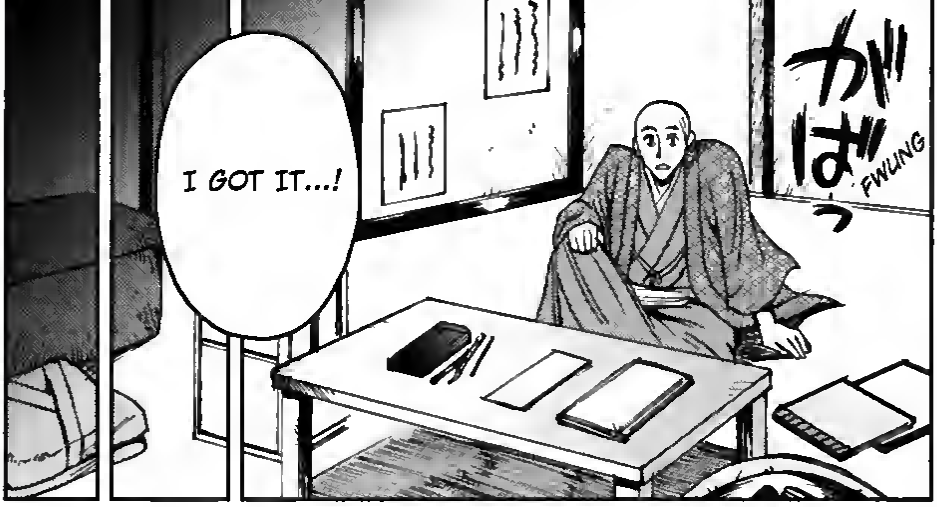

BUT IS POETRY ONLY ABOUT THAT?
ISN'T THERE A HAIKAI THAT IS NOT DEPENDENT ON POPULARITY?
TRUE, I WAS ABLE TO CAPTURE THE HEART OF PEOPLE OF EDO.
...HOWEVER, INTEREST TOWARDS POETRY COMES AND GOES.
ONCE PEOPLE ARE OVER IT, THEN THAT WOULD BE THE END FOR ME.

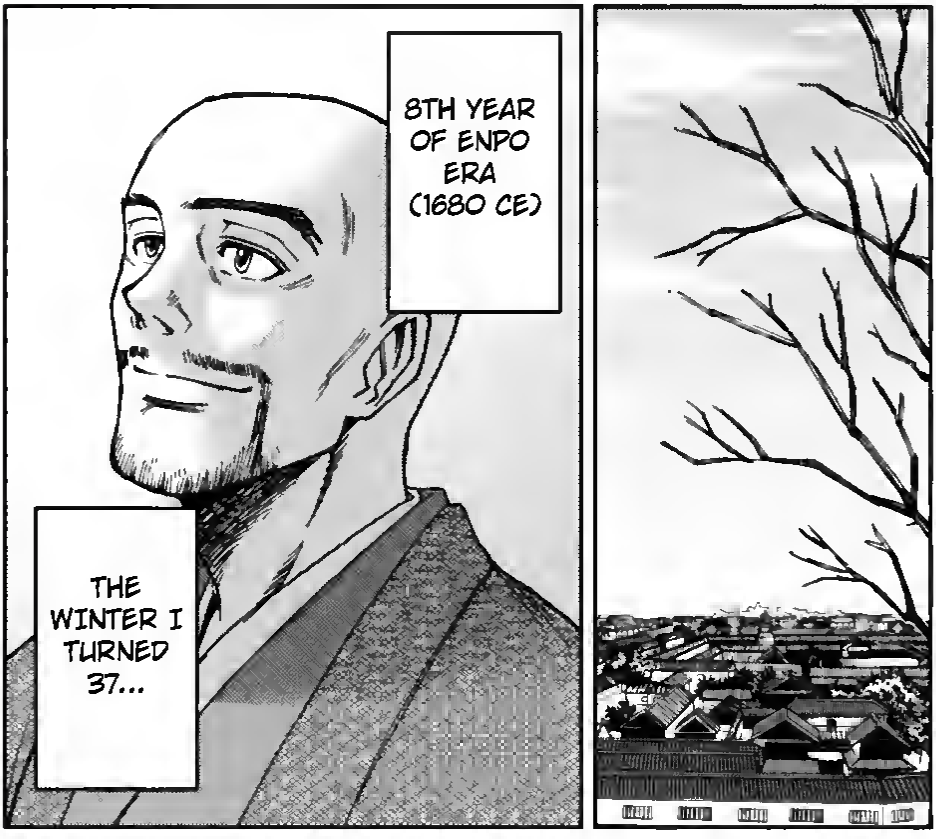


* LET ME DIE IN SPRING...: IF ONLY I CAN DIE UNDER THE CHERRY BLOSSOM NEAR THE TIME WHEN BUDDHA ARRIVES.

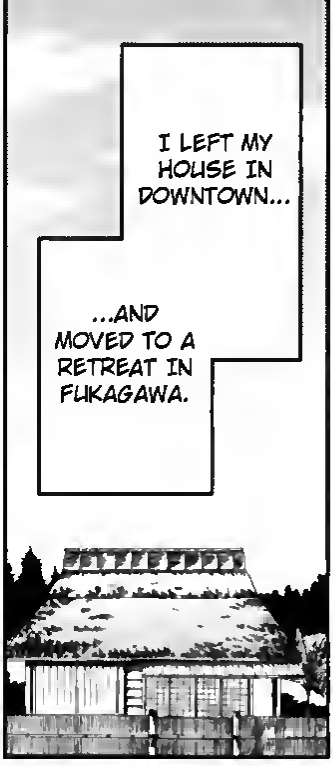
SONGS WRITTEN BY PEOPLE OF THE PAST NEVER GROW OLD EVEN AFTER MANY MONTHS AND DAYS HAVE PASSED.
JUST LIKE THIS POEM BY SAIGYO HOSHI...
I WISH I COULD WRITE SUCH POEMS...
ゴロン
PWUMP
THAT IS PERHAPS BECAUSE...
...IT CONTAINS QUALITIES THAT CAN SURPASS TIME AND REACH OUT TO PEOPLE'S HEARTS.

I WANT TO MASTER MY INDIVIDUAL STYLE OF POETRY MORE FREELY!
POEMS THAT ARE NOT SOLELY WRITTEN TO ENTERTAIN THE RICH...
!
...
...BUT THAT'S NOT POSSI-BLE WITH THIS KIND OF LIVING.

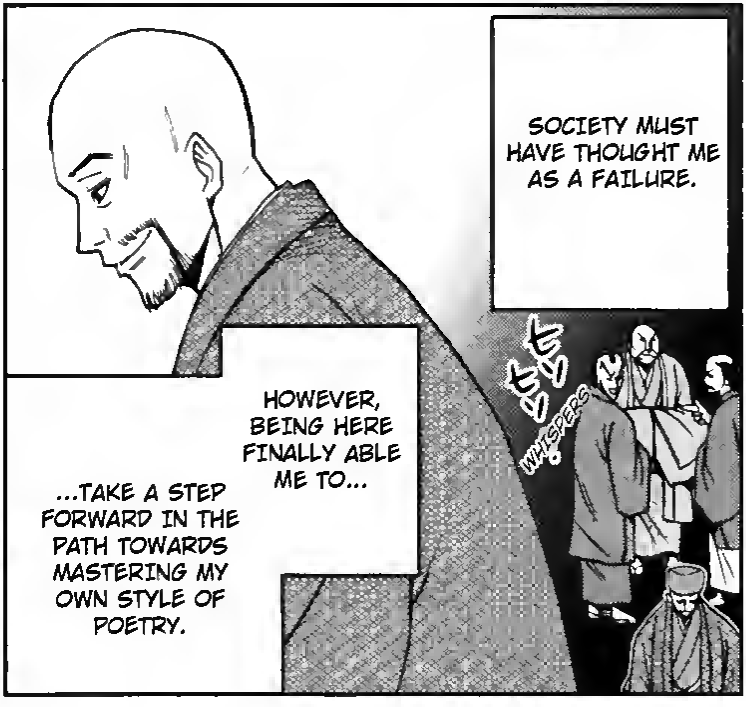

I GOT IT...!
FWUNG

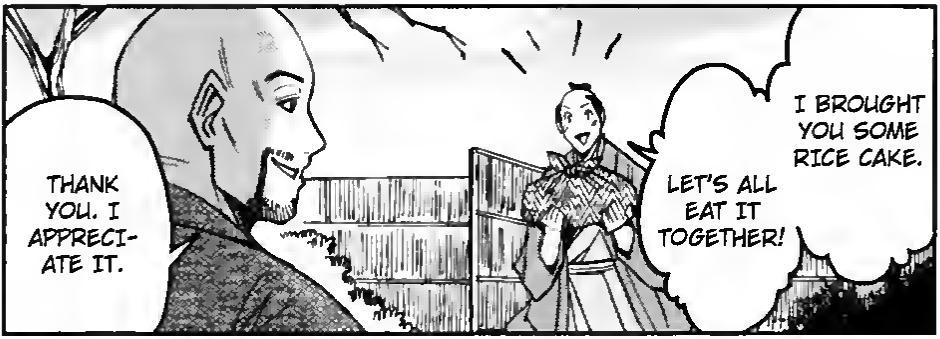

8TH YEAR OF ENPO ERA (1680 CE)
THE WINTER I TURNED 37...

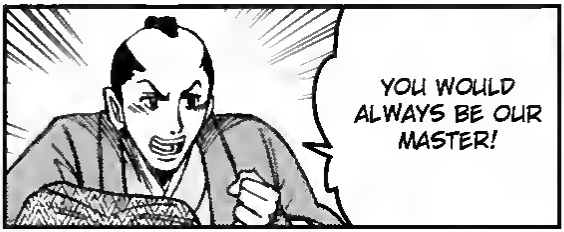
I ALSO QUIT MY PROFES-SION AS A HAIKAI MASTER.
NOW I AM MERELY A HERMIT.


I LEFT MY HOUSE IN DOWNTOWN...
...AND MOVED TO A RETREAT IN FUKAGAWA.

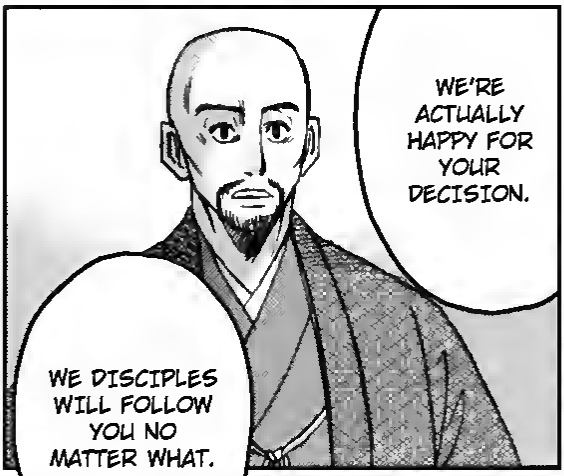
MASTER!!

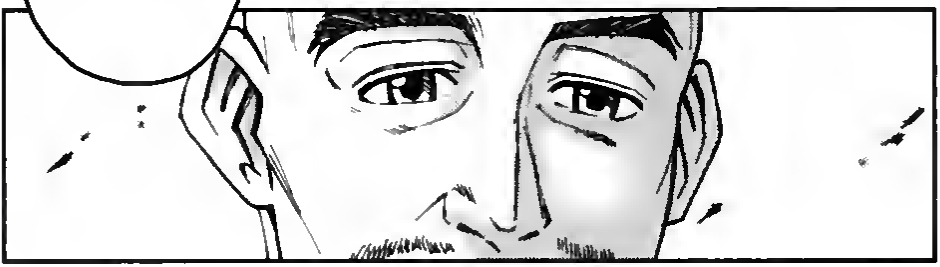

SOCIETY MUST HAVE THOUGHT ME AS A FAILURE.
HOWEVER, BEING HERE FINALLY ABLE ME TO...
...TAKE A STEP FORWARD IN THE PATH TOWARDS MASTERING MY OWN STYLE OF POETRY.
WHISPER
WHISPER

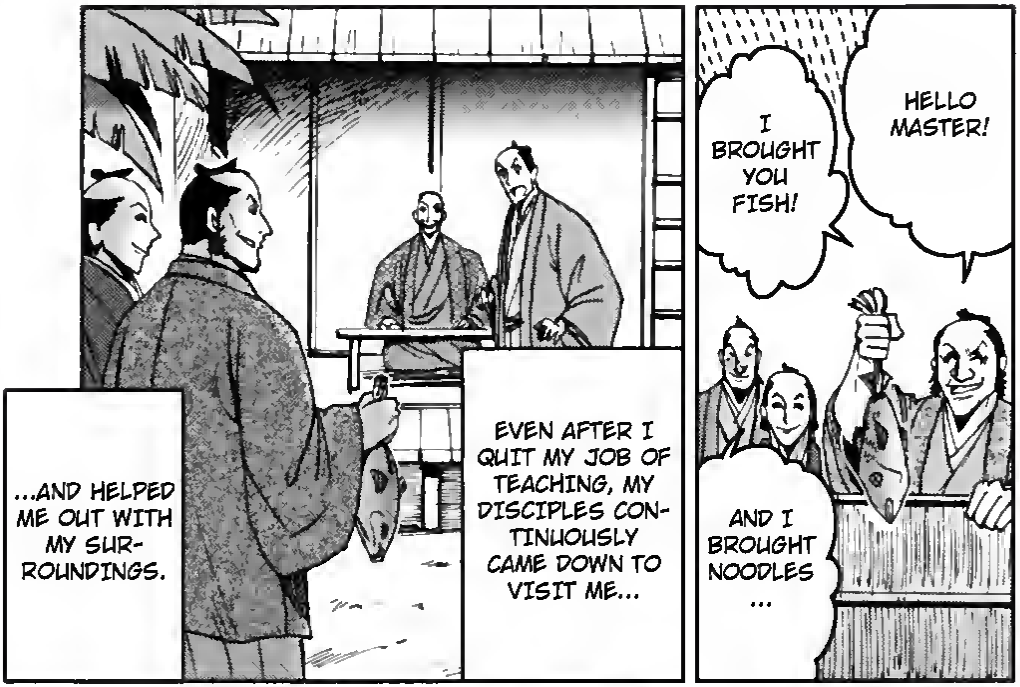

I BROUGHT YOU SOME RICE CAKE.
LET'S ALL EAT IT TOGETHER!
THANK YOU. I APPRECI-ATE IT.


YOU WOULD ALWAYS BE OUR MASTER!

... BUT THERE IS NO NEED FOR YOU TO CALL ME MASTER.
I AM NO LONGER TEACHING.
NO!


WE'RE ACTUALLY HAPPY FOR YOUR DECISION.
WE DISCIPLES WILL FOLLOW YOU NO MATTER WHAT.

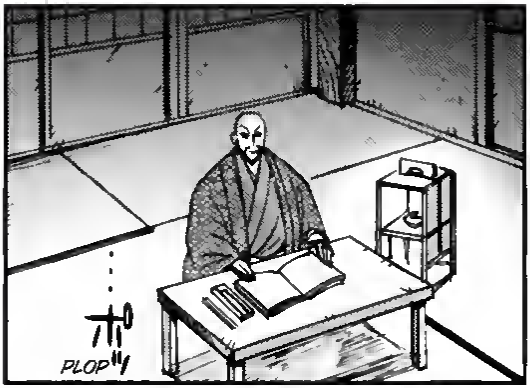



...AND HELPED ME OUT WITH MY SURROUNDINGS.
EVEN AFTER I QUIT MY JOB OF TEACHING, MY DISCIPLES CONTINUOUSLY CAME DOWN TO VISIT ME...
HELLO MASTER!
I BROUGHT YOU FISH!
AND I BROUGHT NOODLES ...

INDEED.
THE BANANA PLANT HAS GROWN SO MUCH!

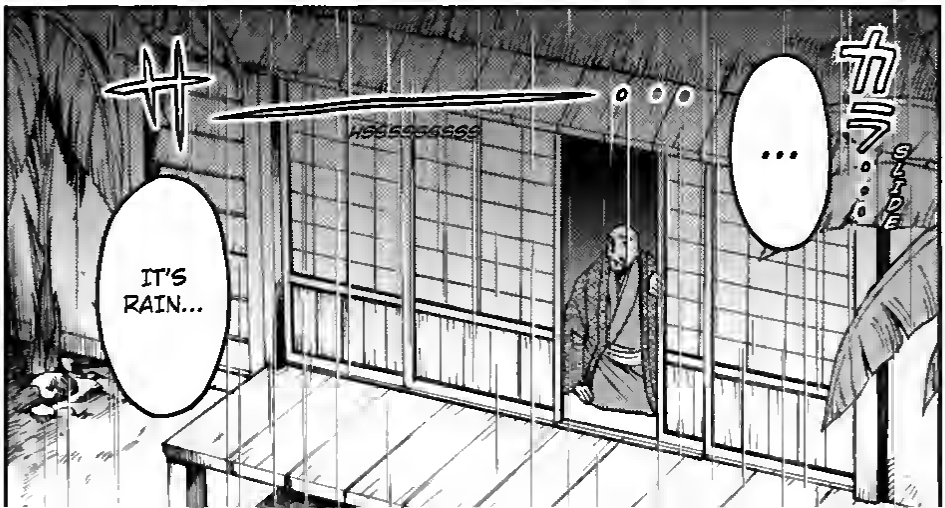
WELL, LOOK AT THAT...

THE "BANANA PLANT RETREAT"?
MASTER, WHY DON'T WE CALL THIS RETREAT THE "BASHO-AN"?
I KNOW.
I SEE... THIS BANANA PLANT IS QUITE RARE AND STANDS OUT.
BASHO-AN SOUNDS PERFECT!
はははHAHAHA
THAT MAKES YOU MASTER BASHO!
IN THAT CASE, I, WHO AM THE HEAD OF THIS RETREAT, SHOULD BE CALLED BASHO MATSUO.


PLOP

FLICKER
LIKE SO, I WITHDREW FROM SOCIETY AND BEGAN MY LIFE AT THE BASHO-AN.

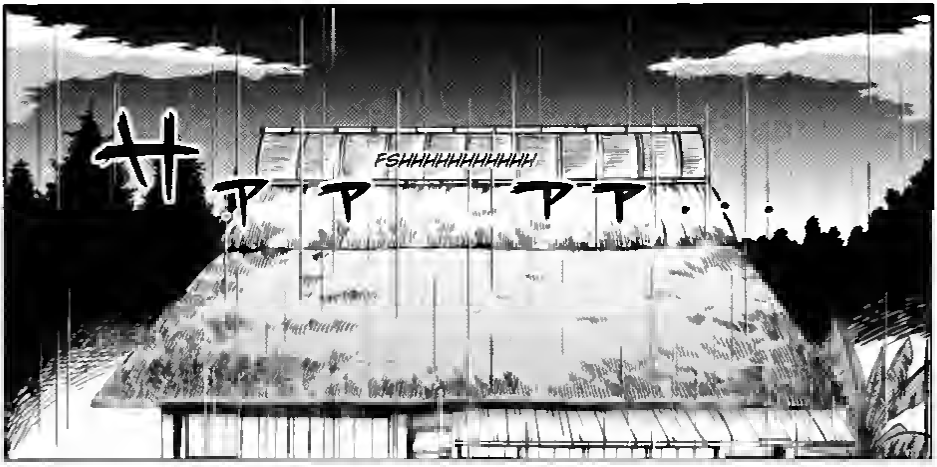
PLOP
PLOP

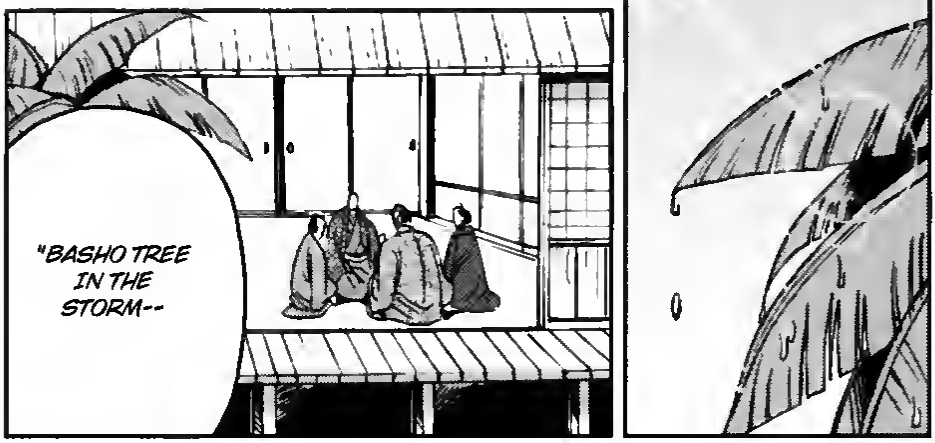

HSSSSSSSSS
IT'S RAIN...
...
カラ…
SLIDE

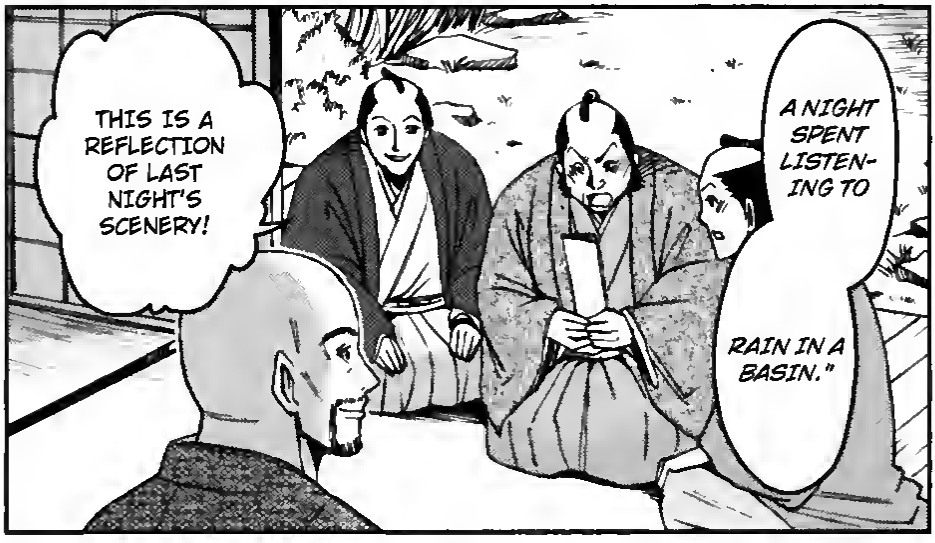
ポタ
PLOOP
!
!
!
はは…
HAHA
WELL IT IS JUST A THATCHED HUT.
OF COURSE IT WOULD LEAK.
ポ チャ
PLOOP

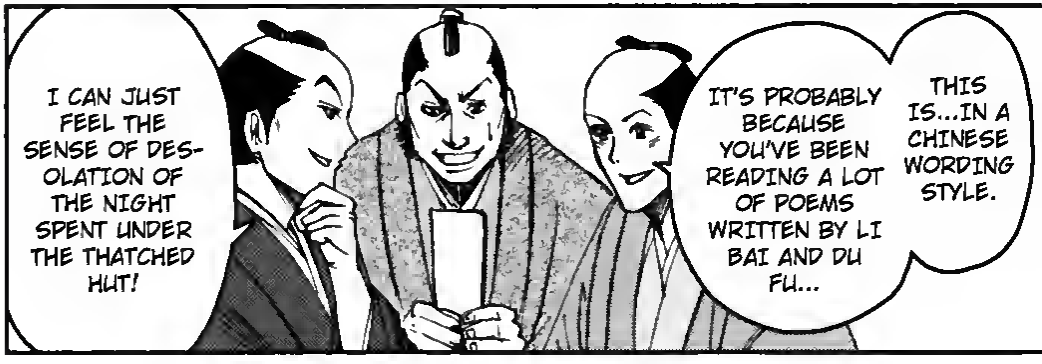
PLOOP
PLLOP
SPLAT
PLOOP

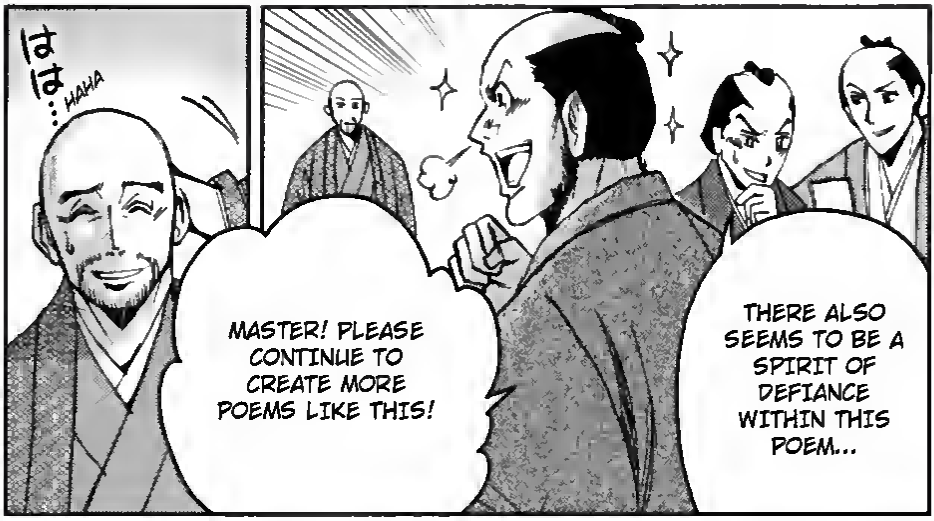
THIS CAN BE QUITE GRACEFUL.
SLEEPING WHILE LISTENING TO THE ROOF LEAK...

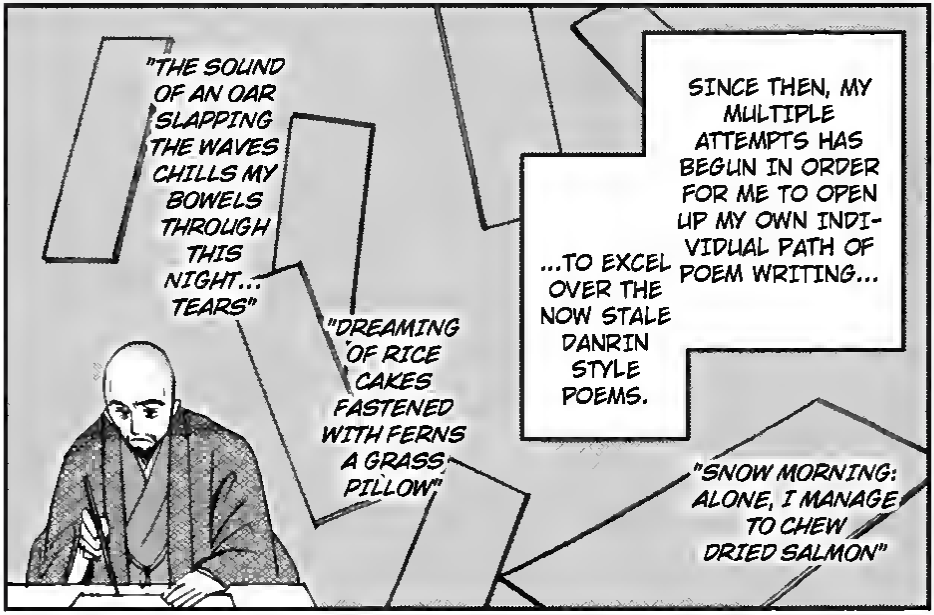

FSHHHHHHHHHH


"BASHO TREE IN THE STORM--


THIS IS A REFLECTION OF LAST NIGHT'S SCENERY!
A NIGHT SPENT LISTEN-ING TO
RAIN IN A BASIN."


I CAN JUST FEEL THE SENSE OF DES-OLATION OF THE NIGHT SPENT UNDER THE THATCHED HUT!
IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE YOU'VE BEEN READING A LOT OF POEMS WRITTEN BY LI BAI AND DU FU...
THIS IS...IN A CHINESE WORDING STYLE.


はは…
HAHA
MASTER! PLEASE CONTINUE TO CREATE MORE POEMS LIKE THIS!
THERE ALSO SEEMS TO BE A SPIRIT OF DEFIANCE WITHIN THIS POEM...

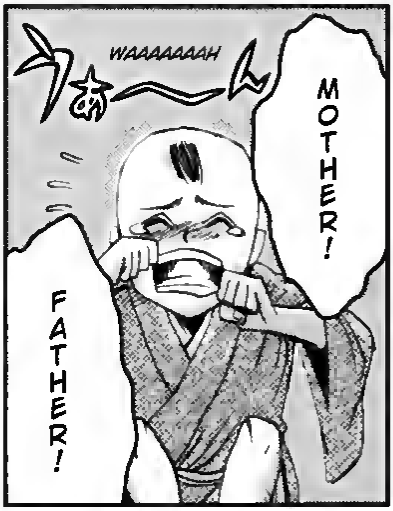

"THE SOUND OF AN OAR SLAPPING THE WAVES CHILLS MY BOWELS THROUGH THIS NIGHT... TEARS"
"DREAMING OF RICE CAKES FASTENED WITH FERNS A GRASS PILLOW"
SINCE THEN, MY MULTIPLE ATTEMPTS HAS BEGUN IN ORDER FOR ME TO OPEN UP MY OWN INDIVIDUAL PATH OF POEM WRITING...
...TO EXCEL OVER THE NOW STALE DANRIN STYLE POEMS.
"SNOW MORNING: ALONE, I MANAGE TO CHEW DRIED SALMON"

AND THAT IS WHEN I RECEIVED A NOTICE OF MY MOTHER'S DEATH.
FWOOSH

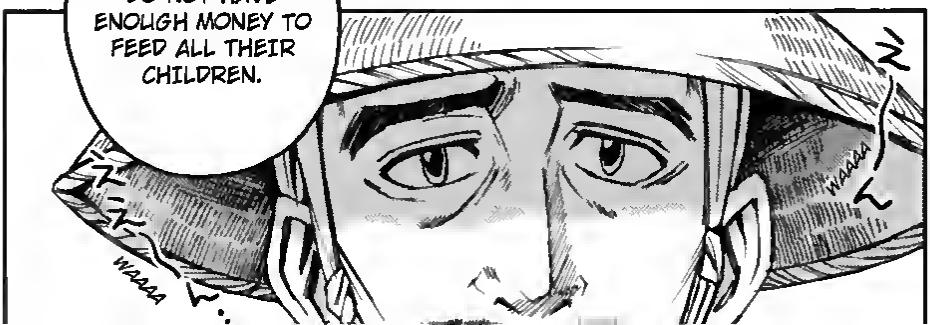
HOWEVER, I WAS NOT ABLE TO RETURN TO MY HOMELAND THAT YEAR.
SO IN AUGUST OF THE FOLLOWING YEAR, WHICH WAS THE FIRST YEAR OF THE JOKYO ERA (1684 CE)...
ALL THOUGH IT WAS A TRIP BACK HOME AFTER BEING GONE FOR MANY YEARS, I WAS IN LOW SPIRITS.
...I WAS FINALLY ABLE TO PACK UP AND LEAVE EDO TO MY HOMELAND OF IGA UENO.

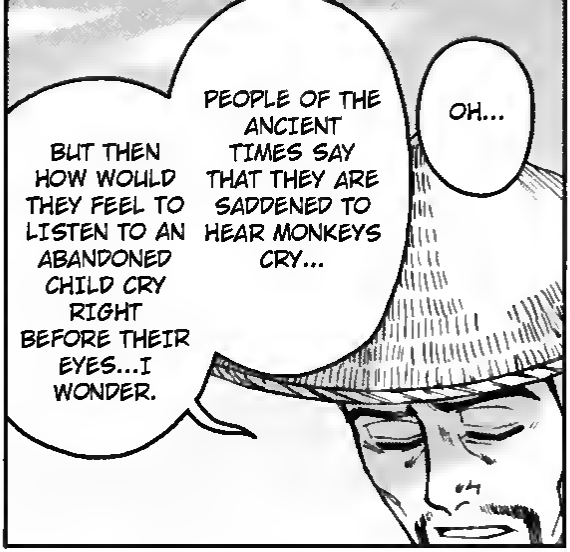
WAAAA
WAAAA

WHAT CAN THAT BE, CHIRI...
HE MUST HAVE BEEN ABANDONED BY HIS PARENTS TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF MOUTHS TO FEED.

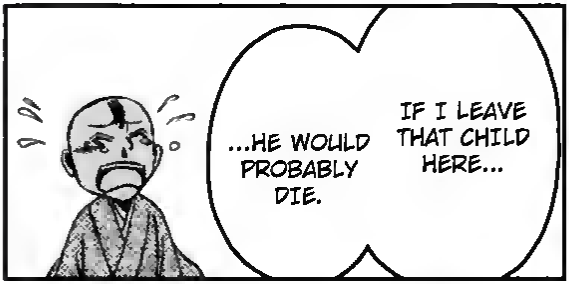

WAAAAAAAH
MOTHER!
FATHER!

WAAAA
WAAAA
CONSIDERING THE FAMINE... IT IS NOT RARE TO SEE SUCH SIGHT AROUND HERE.

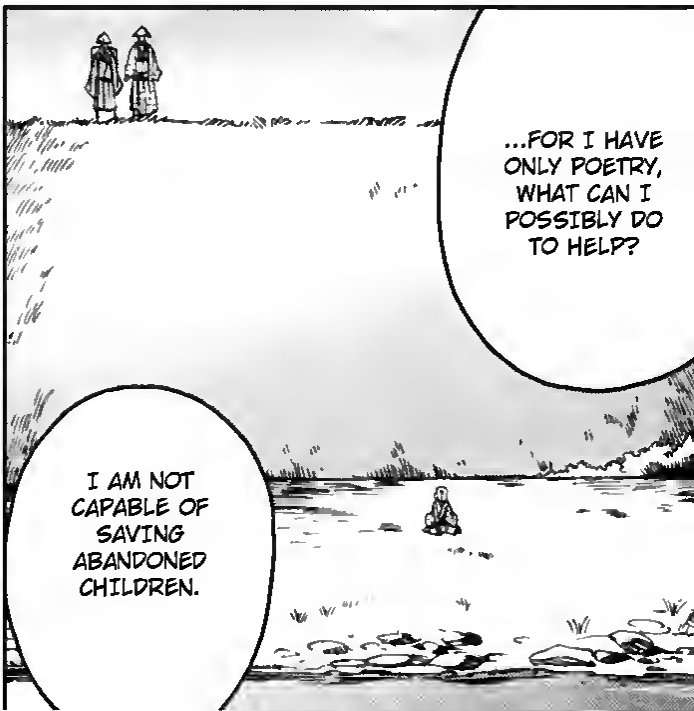

PEASANTS SIMPLY DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO FEED ALL THEIR CHILDREN.
WAAAA
WAAAA


BUT THEN HOW WOULD THEY FEEL TO LISTEN TO AN ABANDONED CHILD CRY RIGHT BEFORE THEIR EYES...I WONDER.
PEOPLE OF THE ANCIENT TIMES SAY THAT THEY ARE SADDENED TO HEAR MONKEYS CRY...
OH...

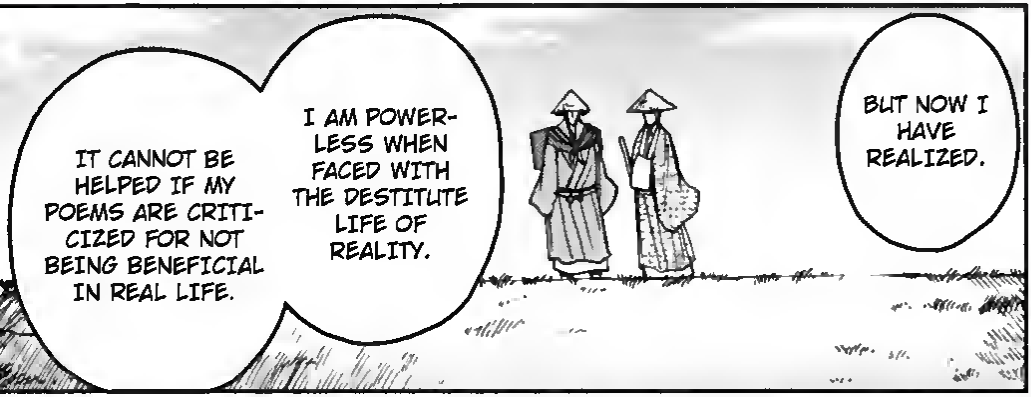
"THOSE WHO LISTEN FOR THE MONKEYS:
WHAT OF THIS CHILD IN THE AUTUMN WIND?"
HM?

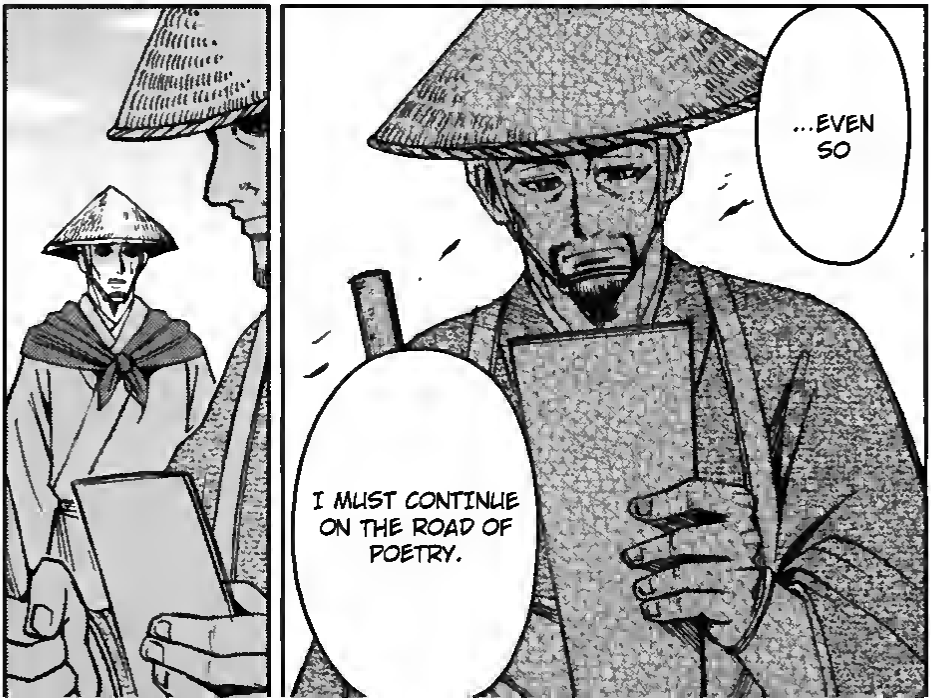

...HE WOULD PROBABLY DIE.
IF I LEAVE THAT CHILD HERE...

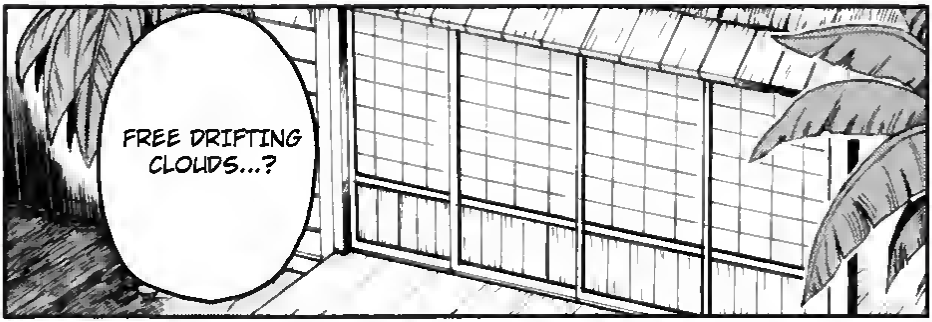
B-BUT THAT JUST CAN'T BE HELPED!

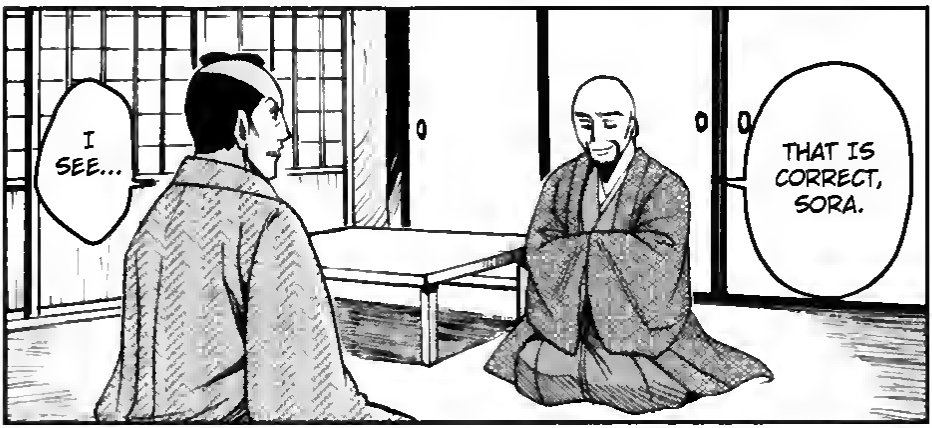

...FOR I HAVE ONLY POETRY, WHAT CAN I POSSIBLY DO TO HELP?
I AM NOT CAPABLE OF SAVING ABANDONED CHILDREN.

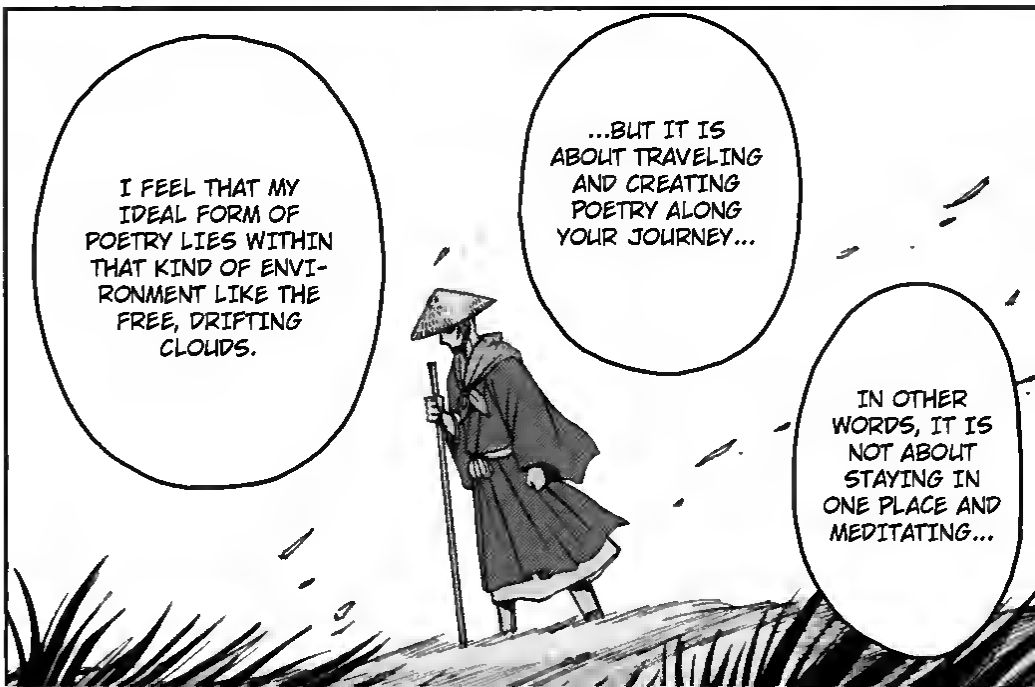
SORRY CHIRI. I DID NOT MEAN TO MAKE YOU FEEL UNEASY.
THE PARENTS OF THESE ABANDONED CHILDREN ARE TO BE BLAMED IN THE FIRST PLACE...


IT CANNOT BE HELPED IF MY POEMS ARE CRITICIZED FOR NOT BEING BENEFICIAL IN REAL LIFE.
I AM POWERLESS WHEN FACED WITH THE DESTITUTE LIFE OF REALITY.
BUT NOW I HAVE REALIZED.

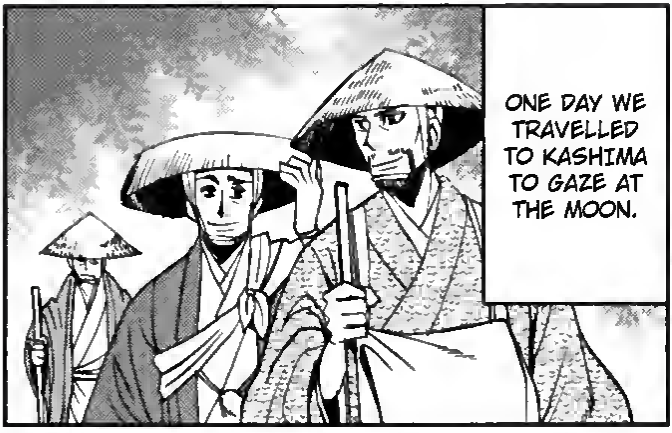

...EVEN SO
I MUST CONTINUE ON THE ROAD OF POETRY.


FREE DRIFTING CLOUDS...?

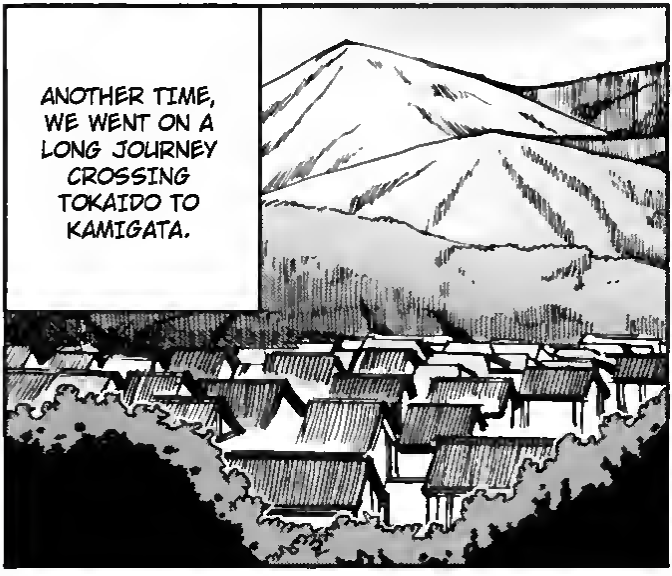

I SEE...
THAT IS CORRECT, SORA.


I FEEL THAT MY IDEAL FORM OF POETRY LIES WITHIN THAT KIND OF ENVI-RONMENT LIKE THE FREE, DRIFTING CLOUDS.
...BUT IT IS ABOUT TRAVELING AND CREATING POETRY ALONG YOUR JOURNEY...
IN OTHER WORDS, IT IS NOT ABOUT STAYING IN ONE PLACE AND MEDITATING...

I AM AN INCOMPETENT, UNACCOMPLISHED MAN WHO ONLY HAS THE PATH OF POETRY.
THAT WON'T DO.
BUT THIS BASHO-AN WAS GIFTED BY YOUR DISCIPLES.
WHY DON'T YOU STAY HERE A BIT LONGER...
NO...
I MUST CONTINUE TO DEVOTE MYSELF TO IT.
THAT IS POSSIBLE, ONLY THROUGH FEELING NATURE AND STIRRING UP MY SOUL FOR POETRY.
SORA...
THEN PLEASE ALLOW ME TO ACCOMPANY YOU ON YOUR NEXT JOURNEY!
...ALL RIGHT.


ONE DAY WE TRAVELLED TO KASHIMA TO GAZE AT THE MOON.

LIKE SO, MY LIFE OF WANDERING HAD BEGUN.


ANOTHER TIME, WE WENT ON A LONG JOURNEY CROSSING TOKAIDO TO KAMIGATA.

MASTER BASHO!!

I ENJOYED THE POET'S GATHERING HELD AMONGST HAIKAI LOVERS.
DURING THIS JOURNEY, I WAS WELCOMED AT EVERY PLACE I STOPPED BY.
PLEASE TAKE ME IN AS YOUR DISCIPLE!!
BAM
MASTER BASHO!!
VWOOSH
PLEASE MAKE ME YOUR DISCIPLE!
ME TOO!
THEN ME TOO!
HEY!
NOT FAIR!
...WELL I'M SORRY.
I HAVE ALREADY RETIRED FROM TEACHING. I CANNOT POSSIBLY TAKE IN NEW DISCIPLES...

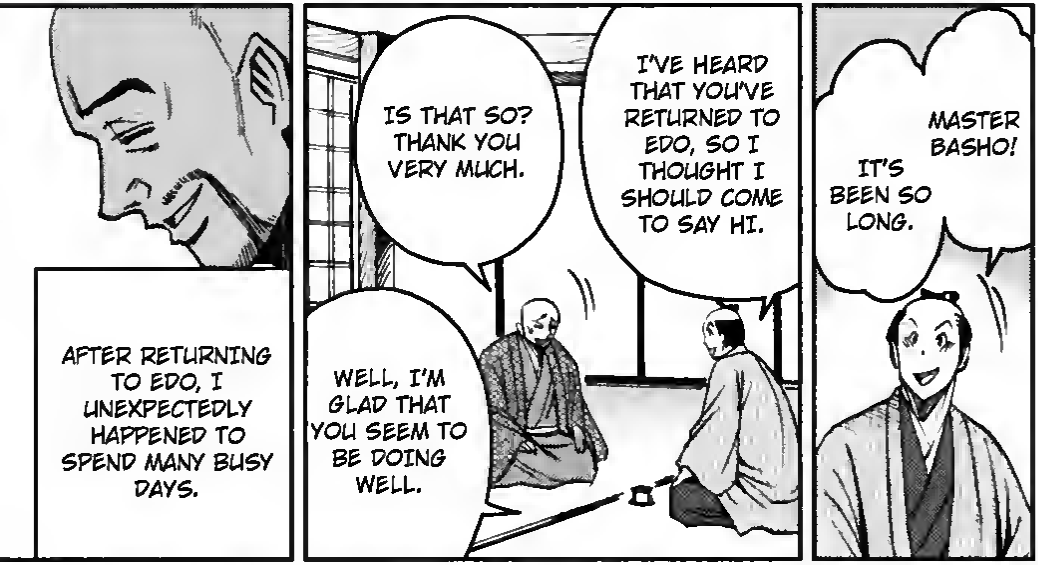
WHEREVER YOU GO, THERE'S ALWAYS MEN WHO WANTS TO BE YOUR DISCIPLE.
MY GOODNESS ...
はは
HAHAHA

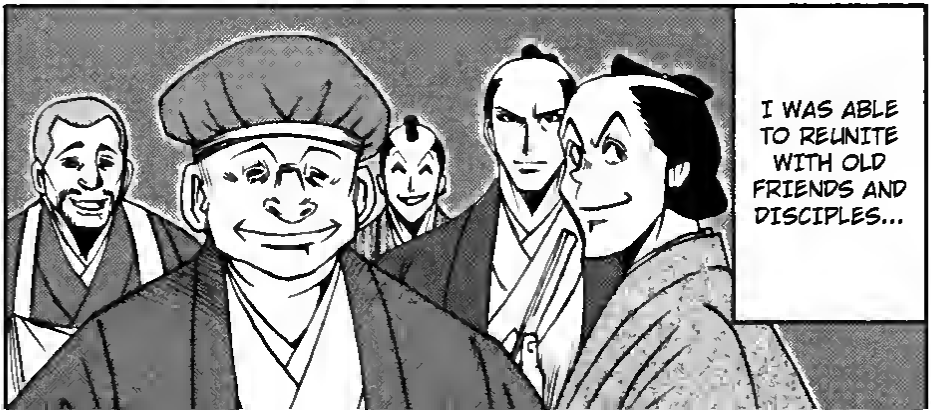
CALM DOWN EVERYONE!!
HEY!
わぁ
AHH
わぁ
AHH

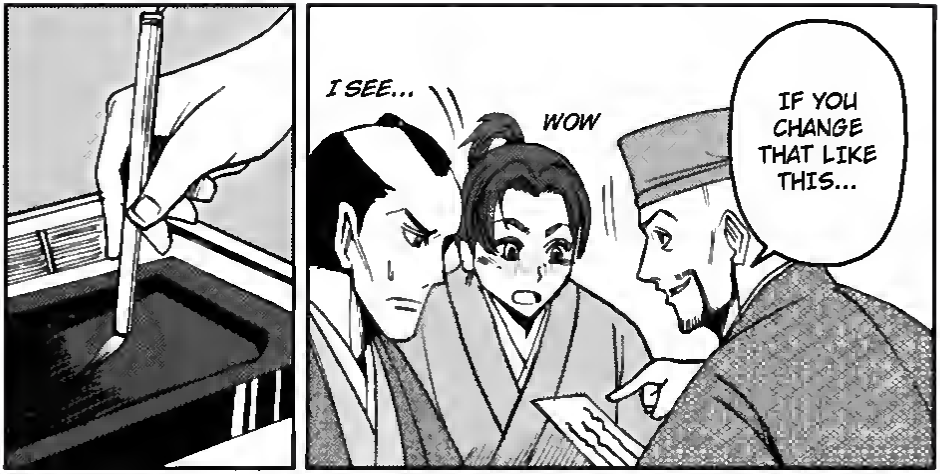
I MUST BE THANKFUL FOR THAT.
THAT JUST MEANS THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO TRULY LOVE POETRY.

...I HAVE FINALLY RETURNED TO EDO.
LIKE SO, MY JOURNEY FILLED WITH PEOPLE'S KINDNESS HAS REACHED ITS END AND...

MASTER.
YOU HAVE A GUEST WAITING FOR YOU.
ALL RIGHT.

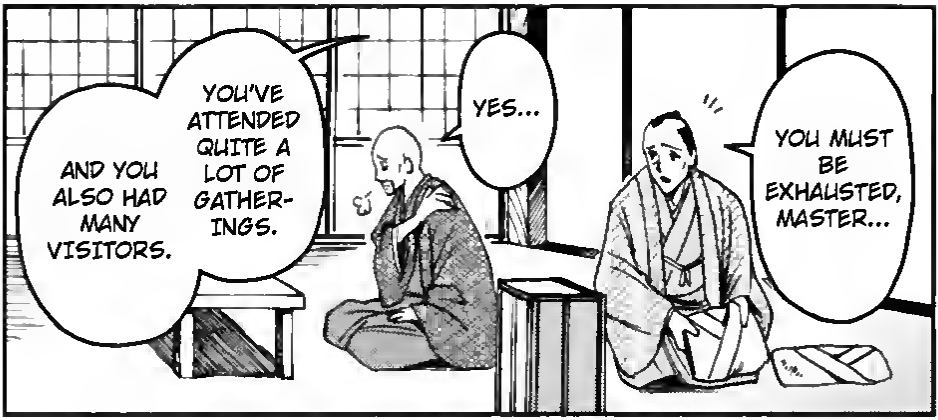

AFTER RETURNING TO EDO, I UNEXPECTEDLY HAPPENED TO SPEND MANY BUSY DAYS.
WELL, I'M GLAD THAT YOU SEEM TO BE DOING WELL.
IS THAT SO? THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
I'VE HEARD THAT YOU'VE RETURNED TO EDO, SO I THOUGHT I SHOULD COME TO SAY HI.
MASTER BASHO!
IT'S BEEN SO LONG.

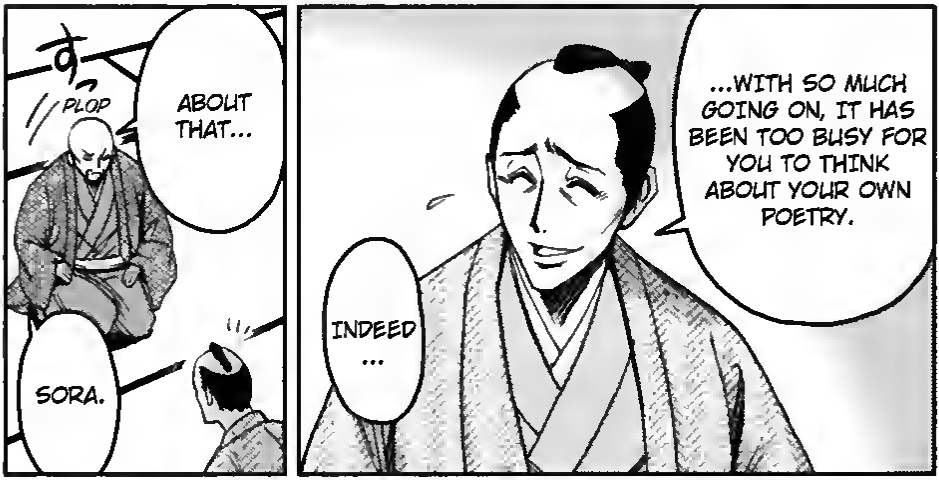

I WAS ABLE TO REUNITE WITH OLD FRIENDS AND DISCIPLES...


I SEE...
WOW
IF YOU CHANGE THAT LIKE THIS...

DAY AFTER DAY, I ATTENDED POET'S GATHERINGS TO TEACH POETRY.

... HMPH

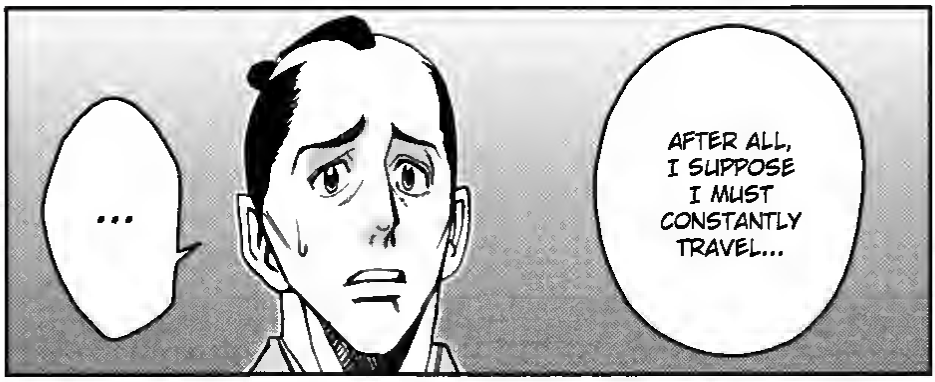

YOU MUST BE EXHAUSTED, MASTER...
YES...
YOU'VE ATTENDED QUITE A LOT OF GATHERINGS.
AND YOU ALSO HAD MANY VISITORS.


...WITH SO MUCH GOING ON, IT HAS BEEN TOO BUSY FOR YOU TO THINK ABOUT YOUR OWN POETRY.
INDEED ...
PLOP
ABOUT THAT...
SORA.

...I'M THINKING ABOUT TRAVELING AGAIN.
THIS TIME IS TO THE DEEP NORTH OF MICHINOKU.

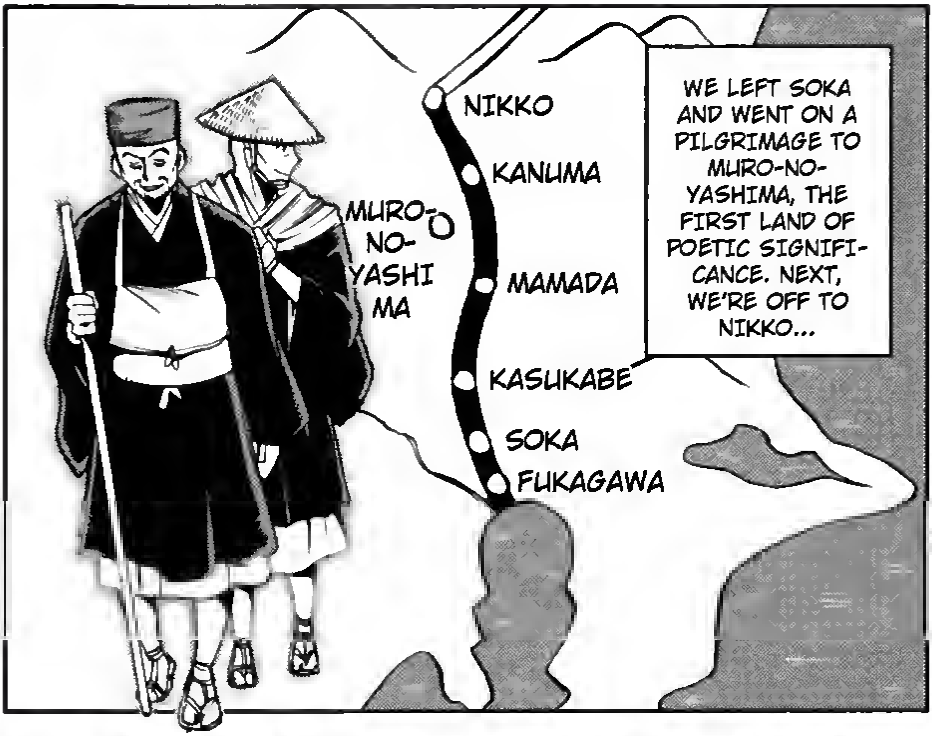
...TO MICHINOKU!?
THAT'S ABSURD! TO TRAVEL THROUGH SUCH HARD TO GET AROUND, REMOTE PLACE LIKE THAT...
HAVE YOU EVEN FULLY RECOVERED SINCE YOUR LAST TRIP!?
...YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT ABOUT THIS BEING NOT AN EASY JOURNEY.
HOWEVER ...
MICHINOKU IS A REGION WITH MANY FAMOUS LOCATIONS THAT HAVE APPEARED IN VARIOUS POEMS.
...EVEN SAIGYO HOSHI TRAVELED THROUGH THIS REGION TWICE...
...AND HAVE WRITTEN MANY WONDERFUL POEMS.
I HAVE CONSTANTLY THOUGHT ABOUT TRAVELING TO MICHINOKU AS A POET ONE DAY...

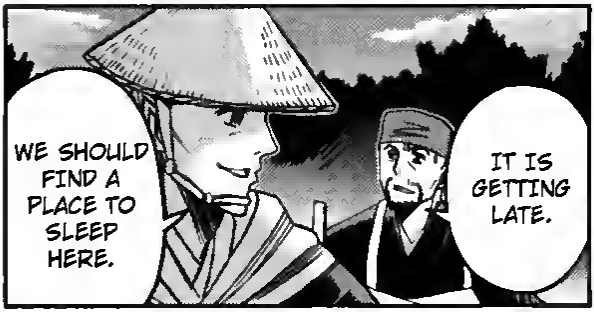
RECENTLY, I HAVE BEEN FEELING UNEASY, EVEN BEING AT THIS RETREAT.
IT SEEMS AS IF BOTH...
THE *SOZORO GOD AND DOSO GOD ARE TELLING ME TO TRAVEL AGAIN.

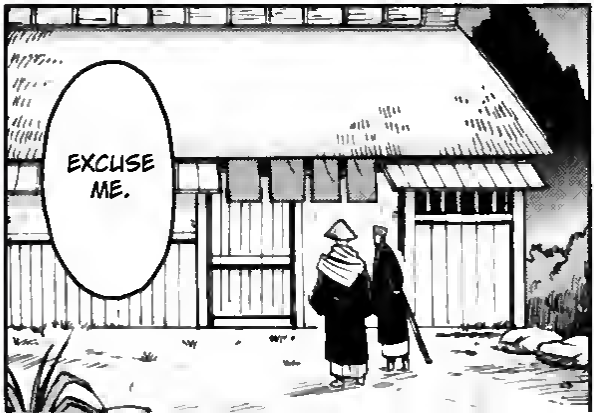


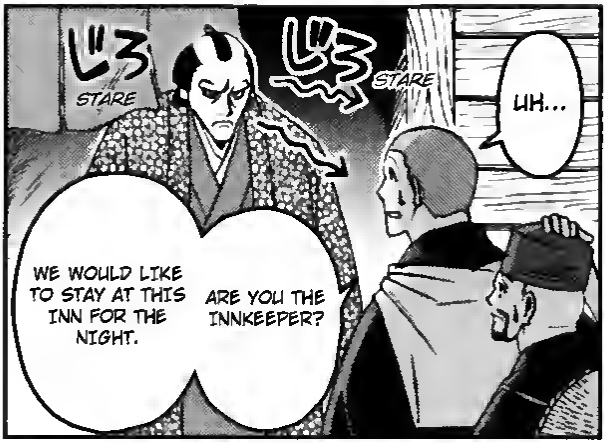
* SOZORO GOD / DOSO GOD: THEY ARE GODS OF TEMPTATION AND TRAVEL, RESPECTIVELY.

I HAVE GIVEN AWAY BASHO-AN AND HAVE LEFT TO TRAVEL TO MICHINOKU.
TIME HAS PASSED SINCE THEN, AND IT IS NOW MARCH OF THE SECOND YEAR OF THE GENROKU ERA...
GOOD MORNING!
LET'S GO
YES, AND MY BODY SEEM TO BE IN GOOD CONDITION TODAY.
HAVE YOU SLEPT WELL?
MORNING, SORA.
YES, THANK YOU. AND YOU, MASTER?
...SHALL WE GET GOING?
YES!

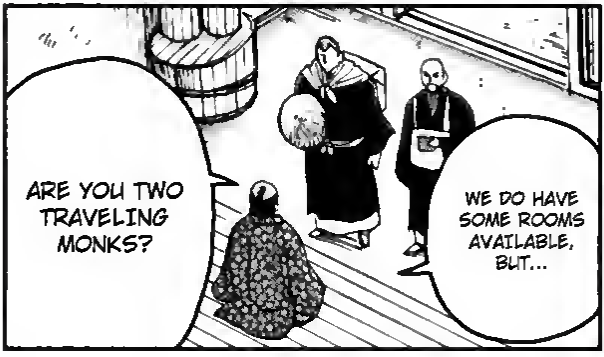

NIKKO
KANUMA
MURO-NO-YASHIMA
MAMADA
KASUKABE
SOKA
FUKAGAWA
WE LEFT SOKA AND WENT ON A PILGRIMAGE TO MURO-NO-YASHIMA, THE FIRST LAND OF POETIC SIGNIFICANCE. NEXT, WE'RE OFF TO NIKKO...


WE SHOULD FIND A PLACE TO SLEEP HERE.
IT IS GETTING LATE.

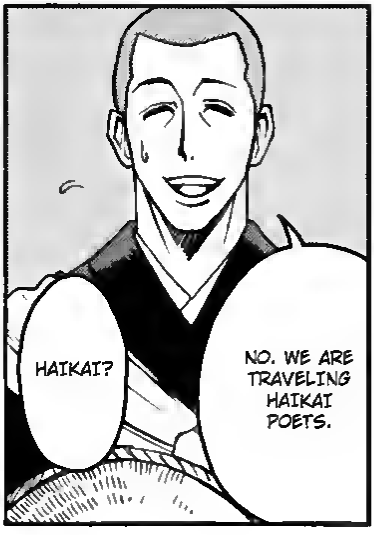

EXCUSE ME.


じろ
STARE
じろ
STARE
ARE YOU THE INNKEEPER?
WE WOULD LIKE TO STAY AT THIS INN FOR THE NIGHT.
UH...

のそ
ZWOOM
YEAH...

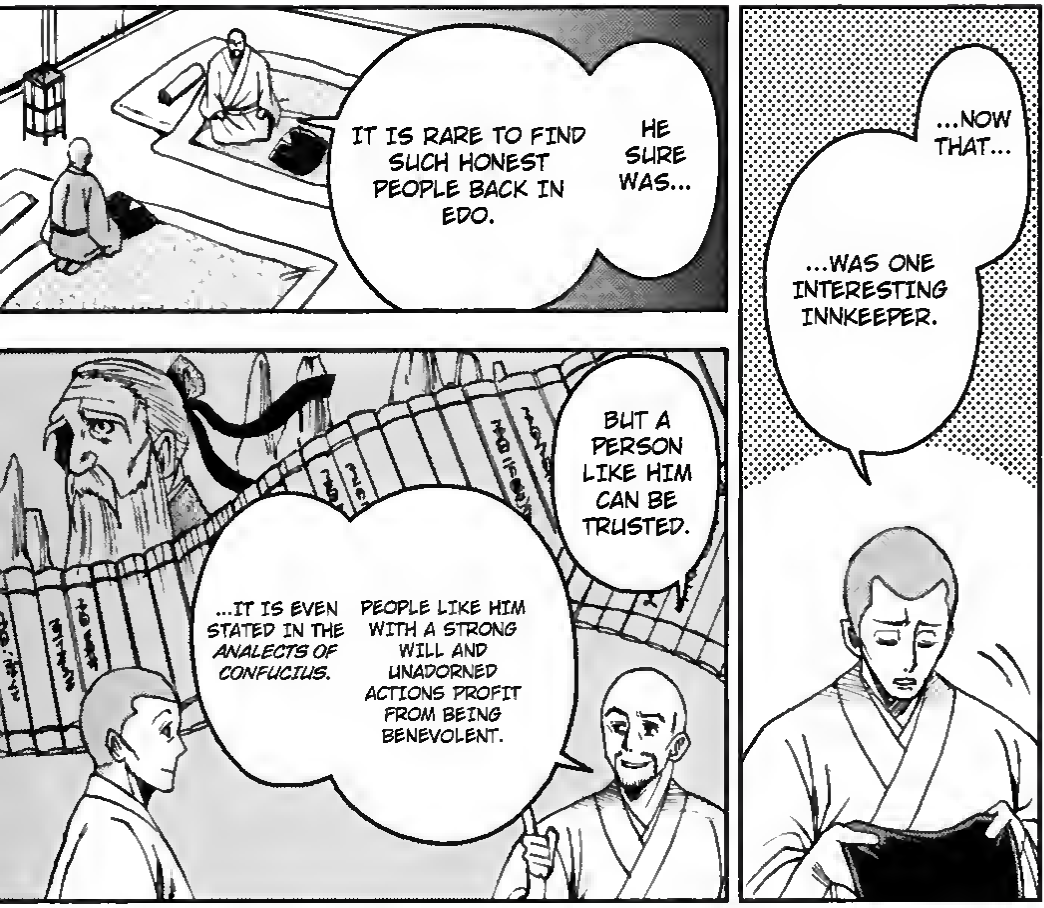

ARE YOU TWO TRAVELING MONKS?
WE DO HAVE SOME ROOMS AVAILABLE, BUT...

IS THAT SO?
YES.
WE WRITE POEMS SUCH AS THESE...


HAIKAI?
NO. WE ARE TRAVELING HAIKAI POETS.

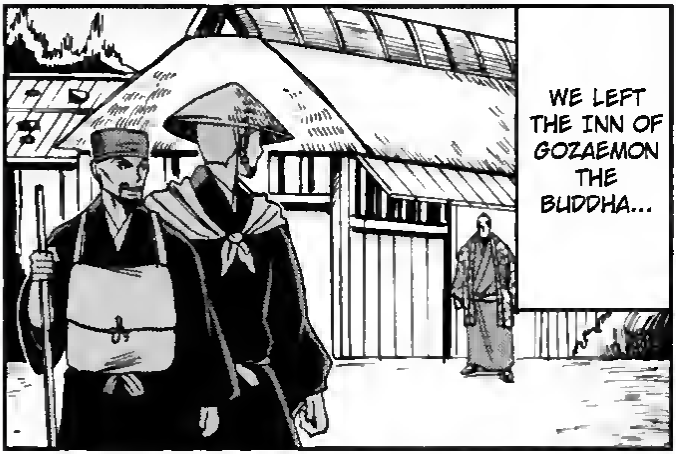
HOW CAN YOU MAKE A LIVING THROUGH SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
HAIKAI IS NOT SOMETHING WE DO FOR MONEY.
...NO.
THAT IS... HAIKAI IS...
SORA!
YOU CAN EARN MONEY WITH THIS?
WE CANNOT POSSIBLY MAKE A LIVING THROUGH POETRY.
SLIP
YOU ARE INDEED CORRECT.
IN OTHER WORDS, I AM LIKE A BEGGAR PILGRIM.
BECAUSE OF THAT, WE ARE ABLE TO SURVIVE THROUGH PEOPLE'S KINDNESS AND HELP.

...I SEE.
EVERYONE THINKS I'M AN HONEST GUY...
...AND CALLS ME THAT NAME.
MY NAME IS GOZAEMON THE BUDDHA.
...NOW I FEEL RELIEVED!
SCRATCH SCRATCH
I JUST CAN'T STAND NOT SAYING WHAT'S IN MY MIND.
I PROMISE TO THIS NAME THAT I WOULD HAVE YOU REST WITH EASE AT THIS INN.

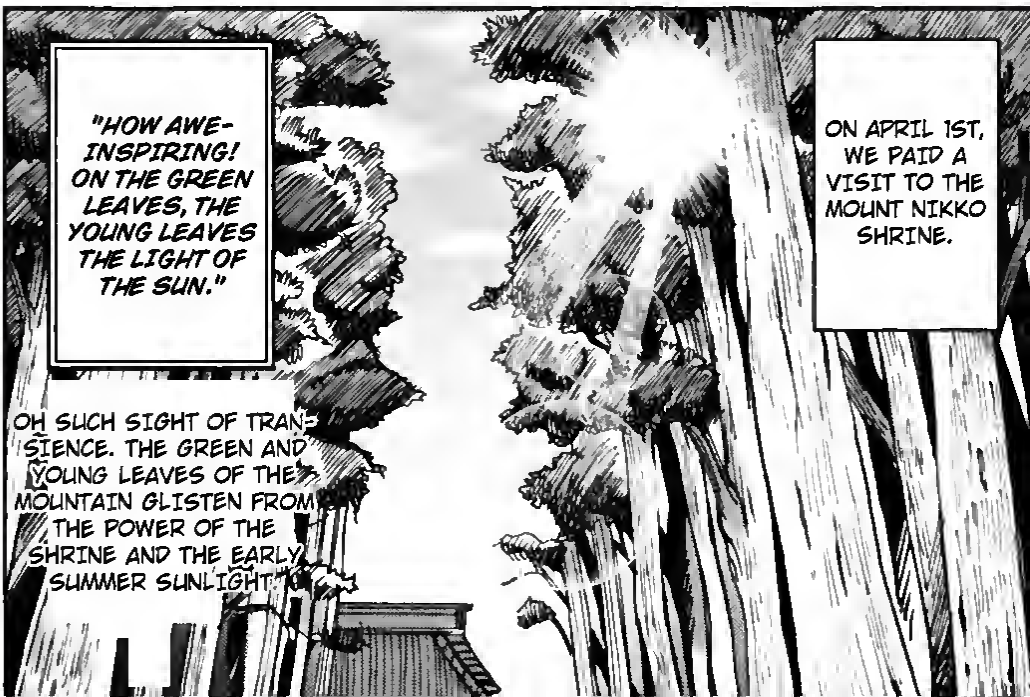

IT IS RARE TO FIND SUCH HONEST PEOPLE BACK IN EDO.
HE SURE WAS...
...NOW THAT...
...WAS ONE INTERESTING INNKEEPER.
BUT A PERSON LIKE HIM CAN BE TRUSTED.
...IT IS EVEN STATED IN THE ANALECTS OF CONFUCIUS.
PEOPLE LIKE HIM WITH A STRONG WILL AND UNADORNED ACTIONS PROFIT FROM BEING BENEVOLENT.

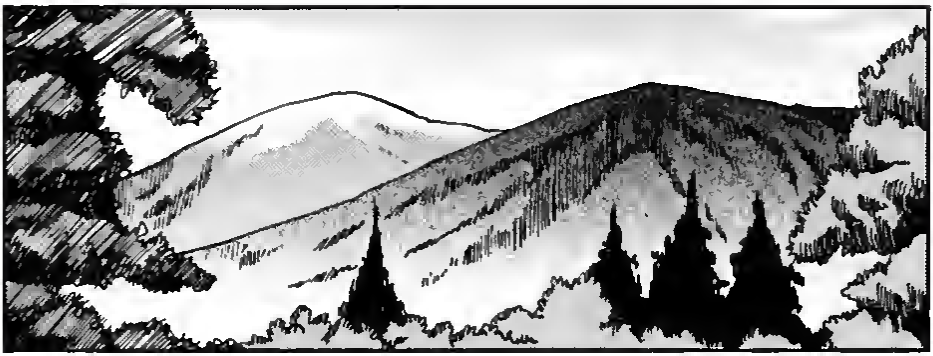
...I GUESS SO.
LET'S GO TO SLEEP.
MEETING PEOPLE LIKE THAT IS PART OF THE FUN OF TRAVELING.

THANK YOU...
...FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY.

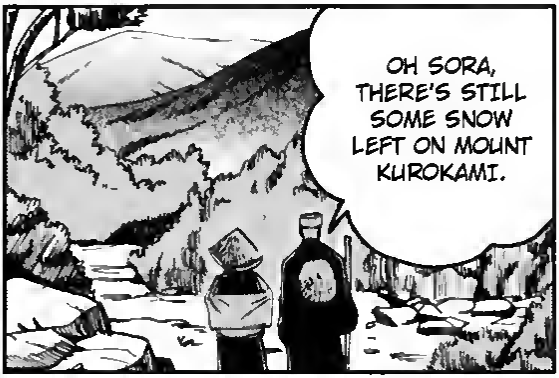

WE LEFT THE INN OF GOZAEMON THE BUDDHA...

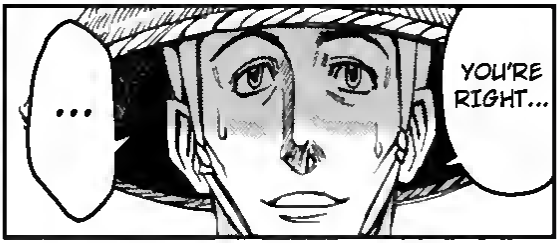
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
チチチ...

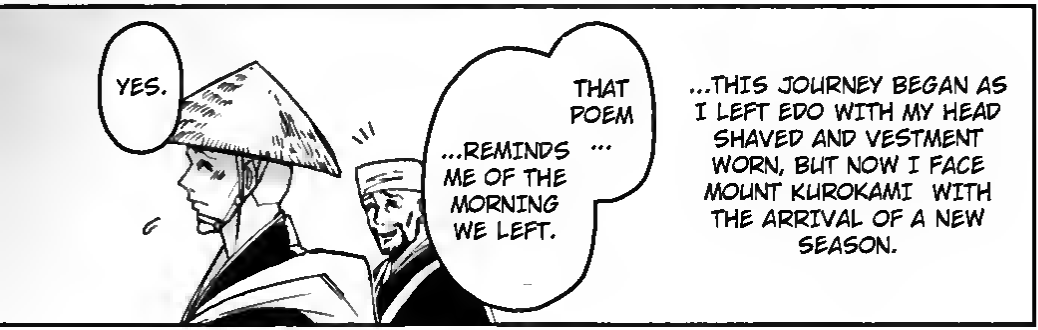

ON APRIL 1ST, WE PAID A VISIT TO THE MOUNT NIKKO SHRINE.
"HOW AWE-INSPIRING! ON THE GREEN LEAVES, THE YOUNG LEAVES THE LIGHT OF THE SUN."
OH SUCH SIGHT OF TRANSIENCE. THE GREEN AND YOUNG LEAVES OF THE MOUNTAIN GLISTEN FROM THE POWER OF THE SHRINE AND THE EARLY SUMMER SUNLIGHT.

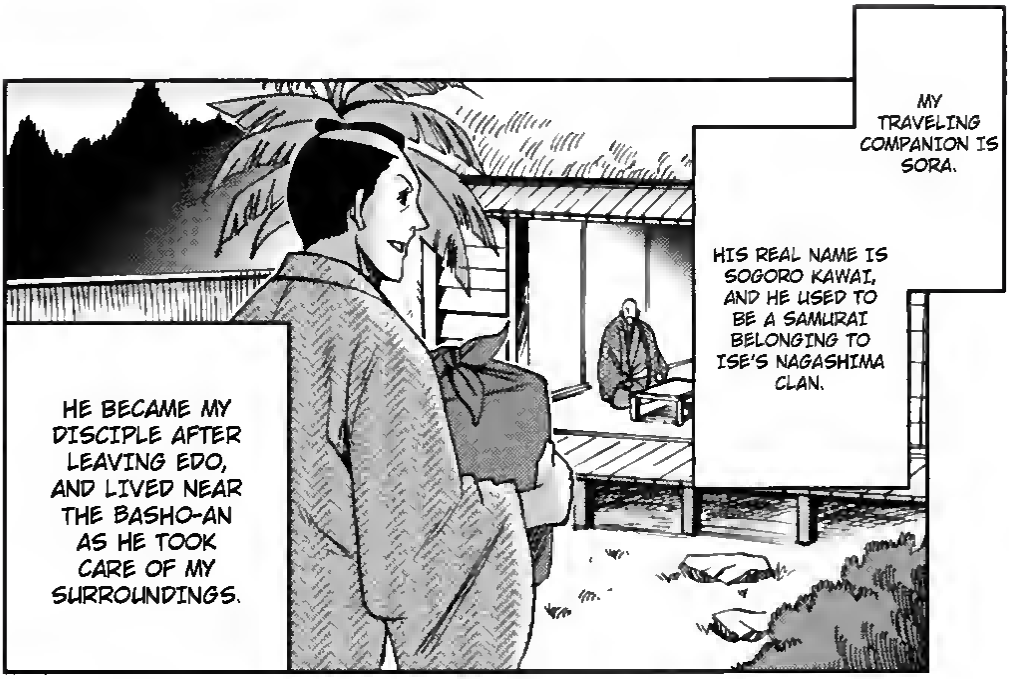


"BLACK HAIR SHAVED OFF,
AT KURO-KAMI-YAMA I CHANGE TO NEW ROBES."


OH SORA, THERE'S STILL SOME SNOW LEFT ON MOUNT KUROKAMI.

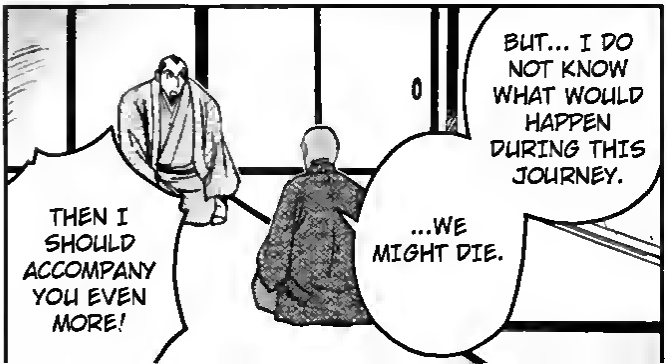

...
YOU'RE RIGHT...


YES.
...REMINDS ME OF THE MORNING WE LEFT.
THAT POEM ...
...THIS JOURNEY BEGAN AS I LEFT EDO WITH MY HEAD SHAVED AND VESTMENT WORN, BUT NOW I FACE MOUNT KUROKAMI WITH THE ARRIVAL OF A NEW SEASON.


MY TRAVELING COMPANION IS SORA.
HIS REAL NAME IS SOGORO KAWAI, AND HE USED TO BE A SAMURAI BELONGING TO ISE'S NAGASHIMA CLAN.
HE BECAME MY DISCIPLE AFTER LEAVING EDO, AND LIVED NEAR THE BASHO-AN AS HE TOOK CARE OF MY SURROUNDINGS.

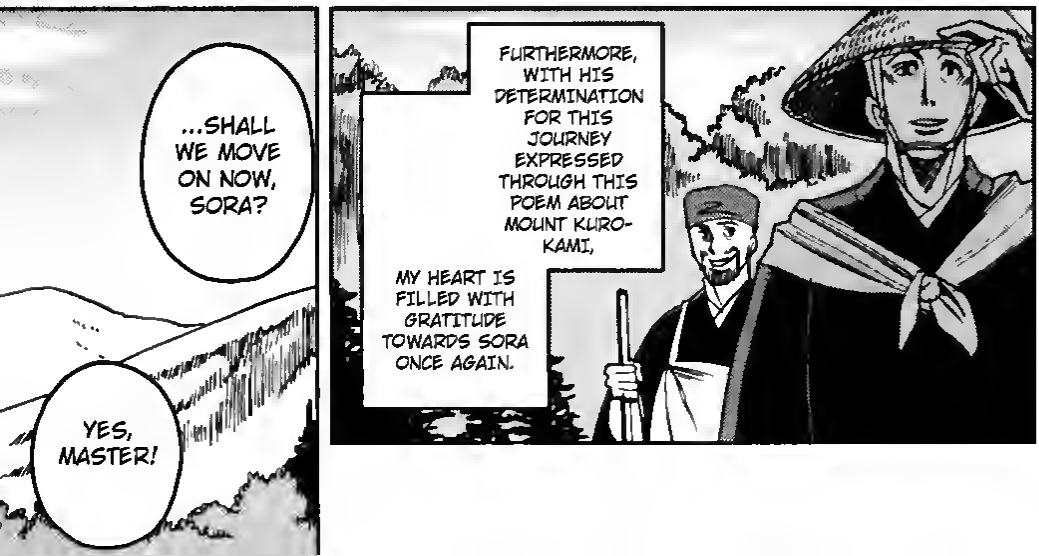
IT'S PROBABLY USELESS TRYING TO STOP YOU.
THEN PLEASE ALLOW ME TO ACCOMPANY YOU!

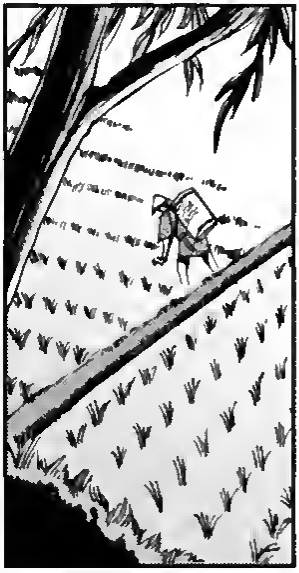
WHEN I DECIDED TO LEAVE TO MICHINOKU...
I UNDER-STAND...


BUT... I DO NOT KNOW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN DURING THIS JOURNEY.
...WE MIGHT DIE.
THEN I SHOULD ACCOMPANY YOU EVEN MORE!

SORA SHAVED HIS HEAD AND WORN A VESTMENT.
THE MORNING OF OUR DEPARTURE...

I THEN REALIZED THE STRENGTH OF SORA'S DETERMINATION.

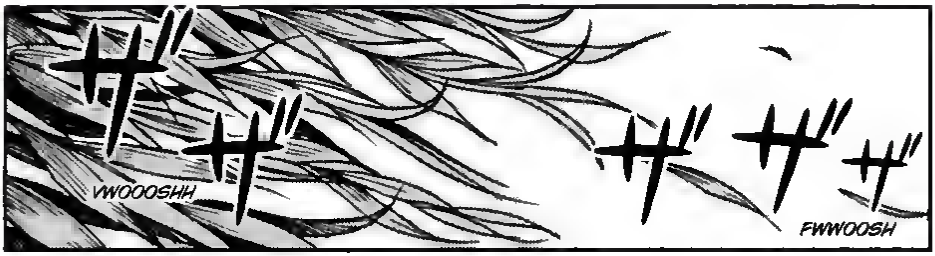

...SHALL WE MOVE ON NOW, SORA?
YES, MASTER!
FURTHERMORE, WITH HIS DETERMINATION FOR THIS JOURNEY EXPRESSED THROUGH THIS POEM ABOUT MOUNT KURO-KAMI,
MY HEART IS FILLED WITH GRATITUDE TOWARDS SORA ONCE AGAIN.



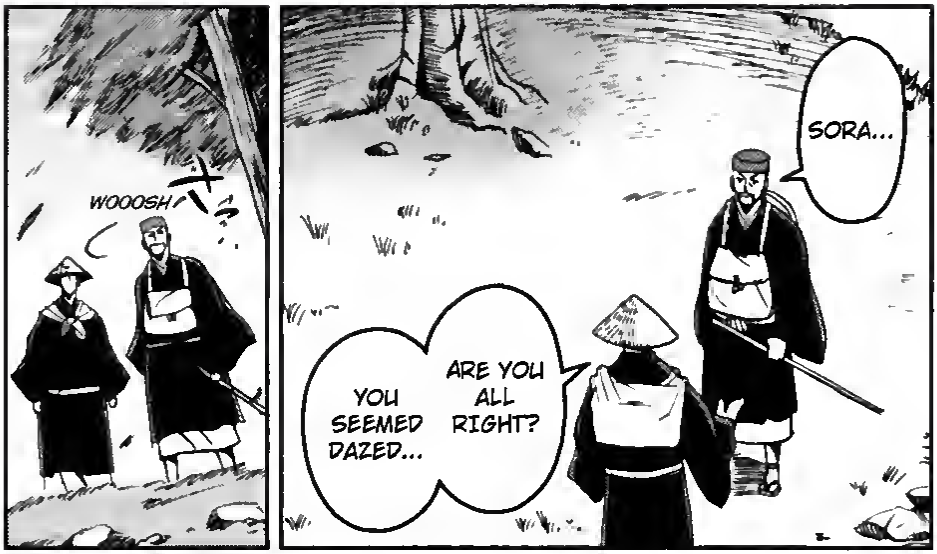
* "ALONGSIDE THE PATH / FRESH WATER FLOWS, AND / IN THE WILLOW'S SHADE / I MUST TAKE MY EASE..." THE INTENTION WAS TO REST FOR A SHORT WHILE UNDER THE WILLOW TREE THAT STANDS NEAR THE RIVER THAT RUNS BY THE ROAD. HOWEVER A LONG TIME HAS ENDED UP PASSING.

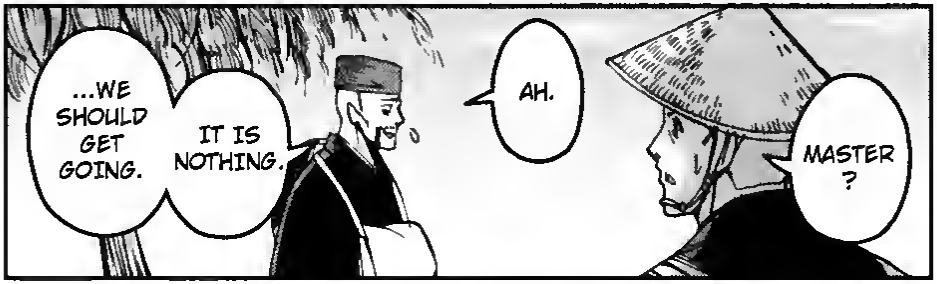
FINALLY, I AM ABLE TO SEE WITH MY OWN EYES.
WHOOOSH
!

...!
SAIGYO HOSHI!?

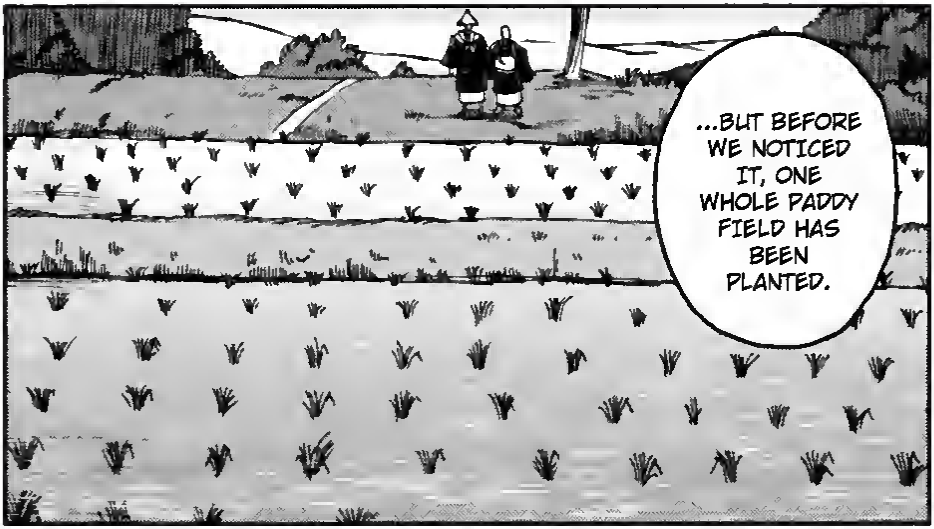

VWOOOSHH
FWWOOSH

...ER!
GASP
MASTER!!


WOOOSH
SORA...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YOU SEEMED DAZED...


AH.
MASTER?
IT IS NOTHING.
...WE SHOULD GET GOING.

TAKE A LOOK, SORA.
IT SEEMED LIKE ONLY A SHORT WHILE...


...BUT BEFORE WE NOTICED IT, ONE WHOLE PADDY FIELD HAS BEEN PLANTED.

"THEY SOWED A WHOLE..."

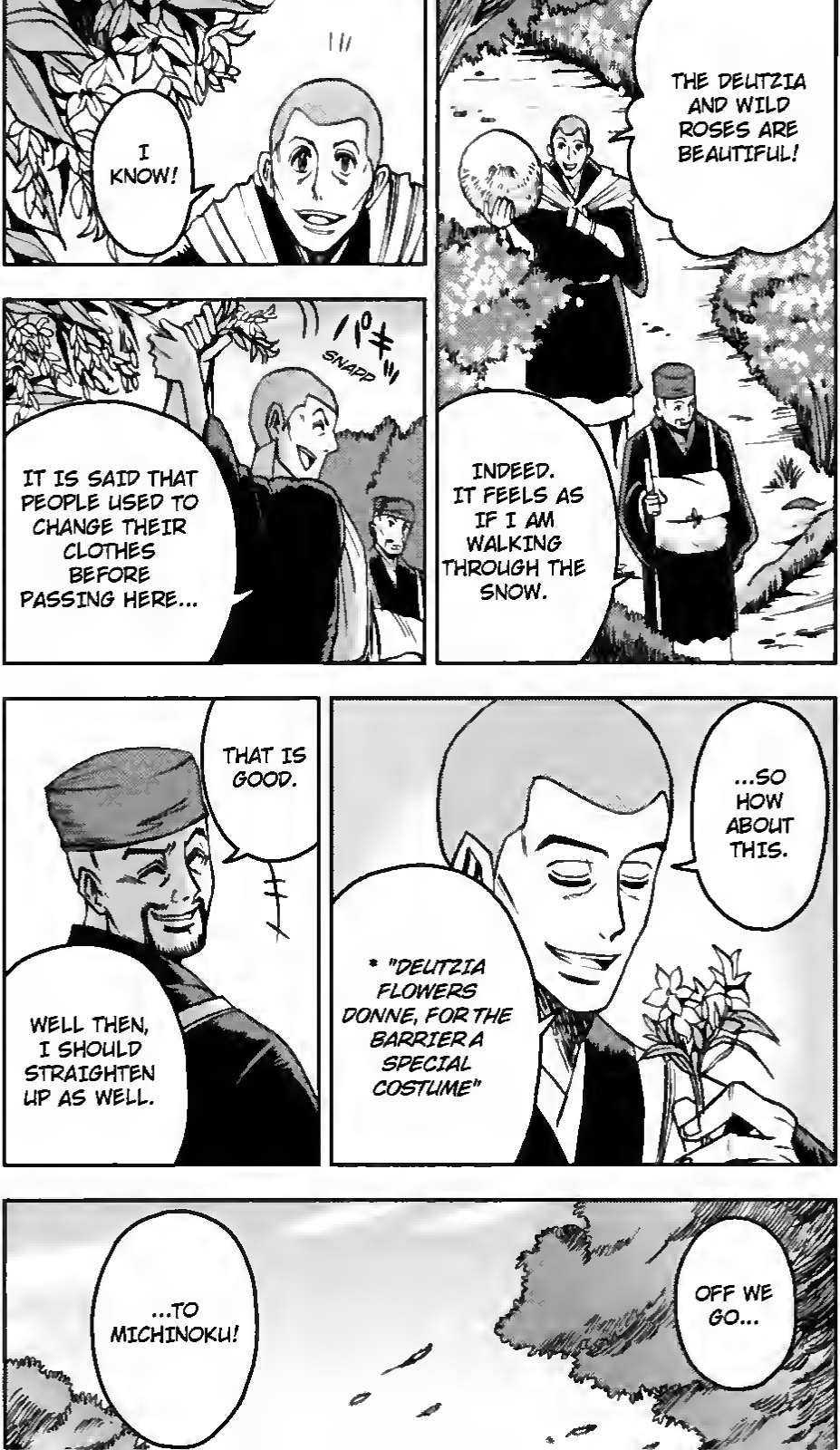
"THEY SOWED A WHOLE FIELD, AND ONLY THEN DID I LEAVE SAIGYO'S WILLOW TREE"
LIKE SAIGYO HOSHI'S POEM, IT SEEMED LIKE ONLY A SHORT TIME HAS PASSED UNDER THE WILLOW, YET REALIZED THAT TIME HAS PASSED LONG ENOUGH FOR ONE WHOLE PADDY FIELD TO BE PLANTED.

MASTER! WE'RE FINALLY HERE!
YES...
FWISH
SO THIS IS THE BARRIER OF SHIRAKAWA!
THE DUO'S TRAVEL TO THE DEEP NORTH
みちのくふたり旅

WE'RE FINALLY ENTERING MICHINOKU ONCE WE GET PAST THE BARRIER OF SHIRAKAWA.

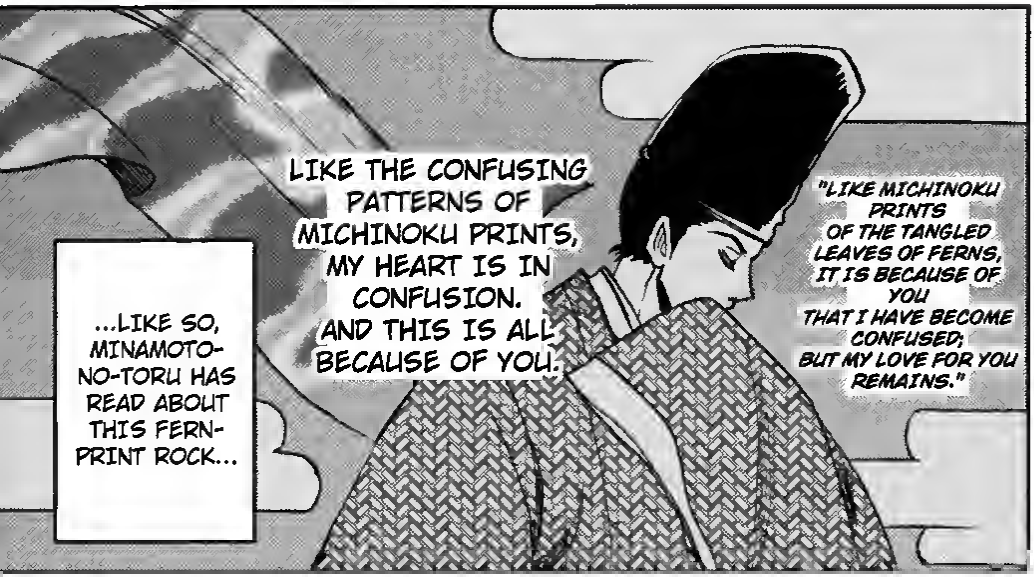
MANY PEOPLE OF THE ANCIENT TIMES WHO HAVE PASSED THROUGH THIS BARRIER HAVE LEFT WORDS ABOUT THEIR STATE OF MIND.
PEOPLE WHO WERE CONCERNED WITH THE POETIC AESTHETICS PARTICULARLY WERE INTERESTED IN THE BARRIER OF SHIRAKAWA.

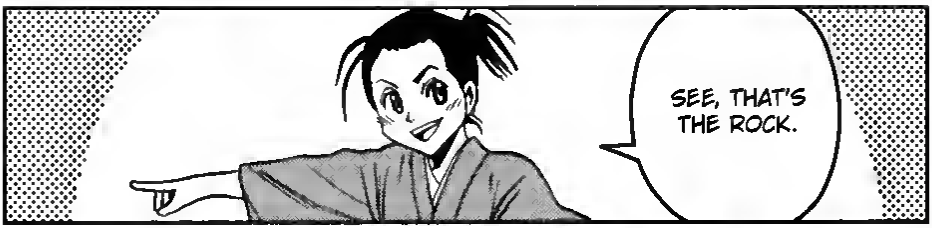
MY HEART WAS FEELING UNEASY DUE TO THE ANXIETY FROM THIS TRIP...
...YET COMING HERE FINALLY GAVE ME PEACE.
I AM NOW MORE MENTALLY PREPARED AND DETERMINED TO LET THE ROAD LEAD THE WAY.


I KNOW!
THE DEUTZIA AND WILD ROSES ARE BEAUTIFUL!
SNAPP
IT IS SAID THAT PEOPLE USED TO CHANGE THEIR CLOTHES BEFORE PASSING HERE...
INDEED. IT FEELS AS IF I AM WALKING THROUGH THE SNOW.
THAT IS GOOD.
...SO HOW ABOUT THIS.
WELL THEN, I SHOULD STRAIGHTEN UP AS WELL.
* "DEUTZIA FLOWERS DONNE, FOR THE BARRIER A SPECIAL COSTUME"
...TO MICHINOKU!
OFF WE GO...

* DEUTZIA FLOWERS DONNE... : HOLDING THE DEUTZIA UP HIGH AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR NICE CLOTHES, I SHALL PASS THROUGH THIS BARRIER.

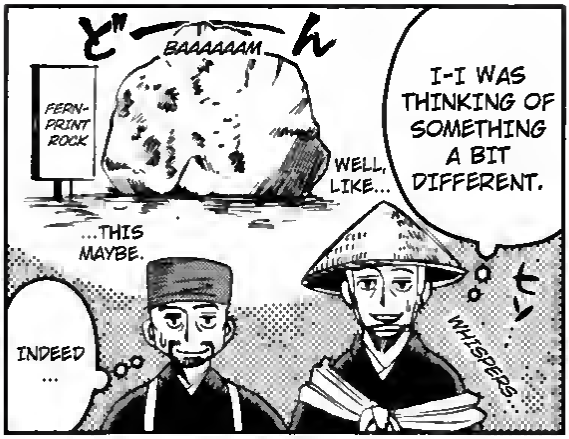
OH.
YOU CAN FIND THAT ROCK OVER THERE.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
FERN-PRINT ROCK OF SHINOBU?
...AH, MAYBE THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT THAT.
I GUESS IT'S QUITE FAMOUS HERE, CONSIDERING IT'S A SIGNIFICANT POETIC LOCATION.
YES.
ONE OF THE MAJOR MOTIVES OF THIS JOURNEY WAS TO TRAVEL TO HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT LOCATIONS THAT HAVE APPEARED IN VARIOUS OLD POEMS.

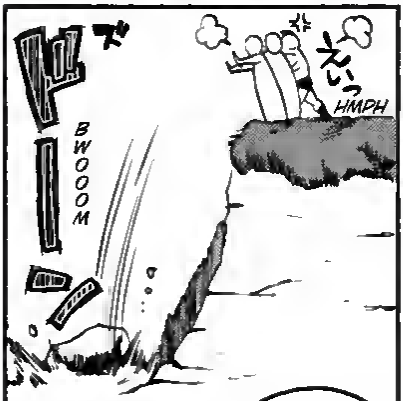

"LIKE MICHINOKU PRINTS OF THE TANGLED LEAVES OF FERNS, IT IS BECAUSE OF YOU THAT I HAVE BECOME CONFUSED; BUT MY LOVE FOR YOU REMAINS."
LIKE THE CONFUSING PATTERNS OF MICHINOKU PRINTS, MY HEART IS IN CONFUSION. AND THIS IS ALL BECAUSE OF YOU.
...LIKE SO, MINAMOTO-NO-TORU HAS READ ABOUT THIS FERN-PRINT ROCK...

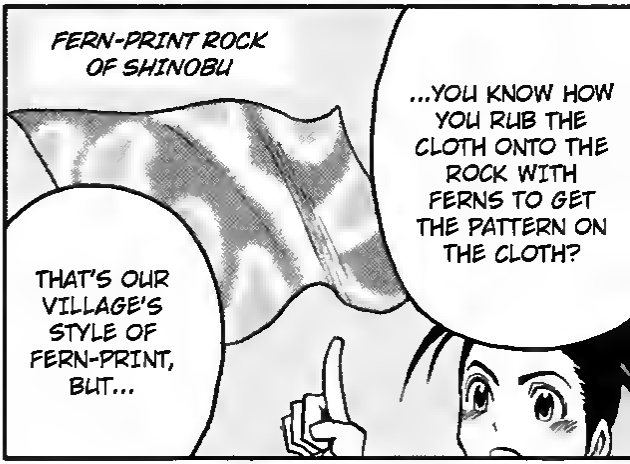

SEE, THAT'S THE ROCK.

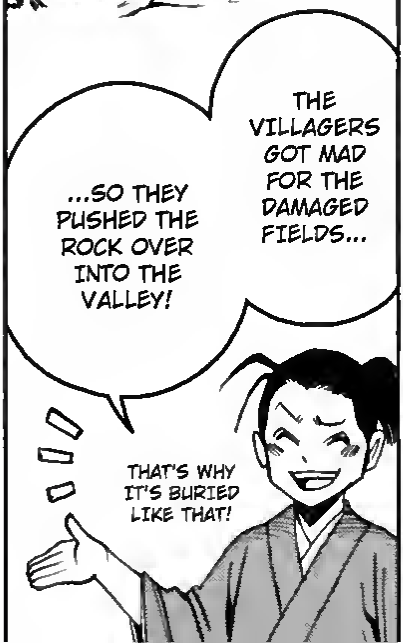
... HUH?

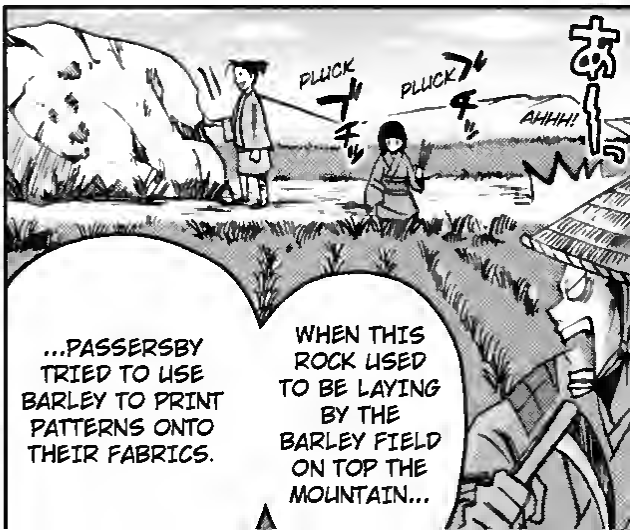
ACTUALLY, THIS ROCK USED TO BE AT THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN.


どーん
BAAAAAAM
FERN-PRINT ROCK
WELL, LIKE...
...THIS MAYBE.
I-I WAS THINKING OF SOMETHING A BIT DIFFERENT.
WHISPERS...
INDEED ...


ズ
BWOOOM
ズいっ
HMPH

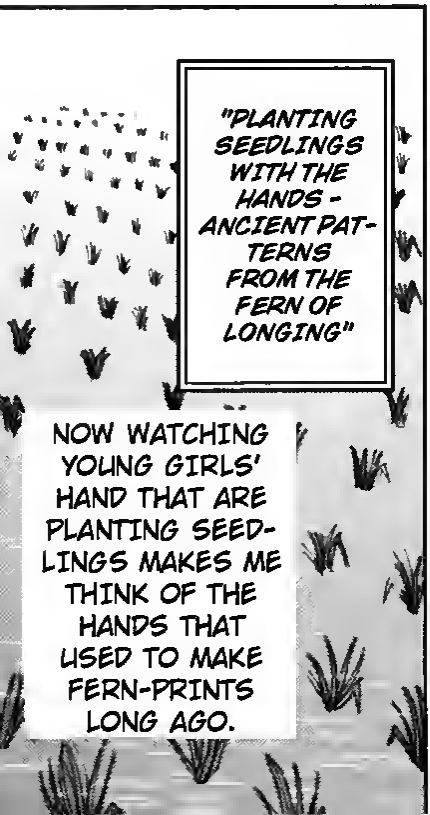

FERN-PRINT ROCK OF SHINOBU
...YOU KNOW HOW YOU RUB THE CLOTH ONTO THE ROCK WITH FERNS TO GET THE PATTERN ON THE CLOTH?
THAT'S OUR VILLAGE'S STYLE OF FERN-PRINT, BUT...


...SO THEY PUSHED THE ROCK OVER INTO THE VALLEY!
THE VILLAGERS GOT MAD FOR THE DAMAGED FIELDS...
THAT'S WHY IT'S BURIED LIKE THAT!

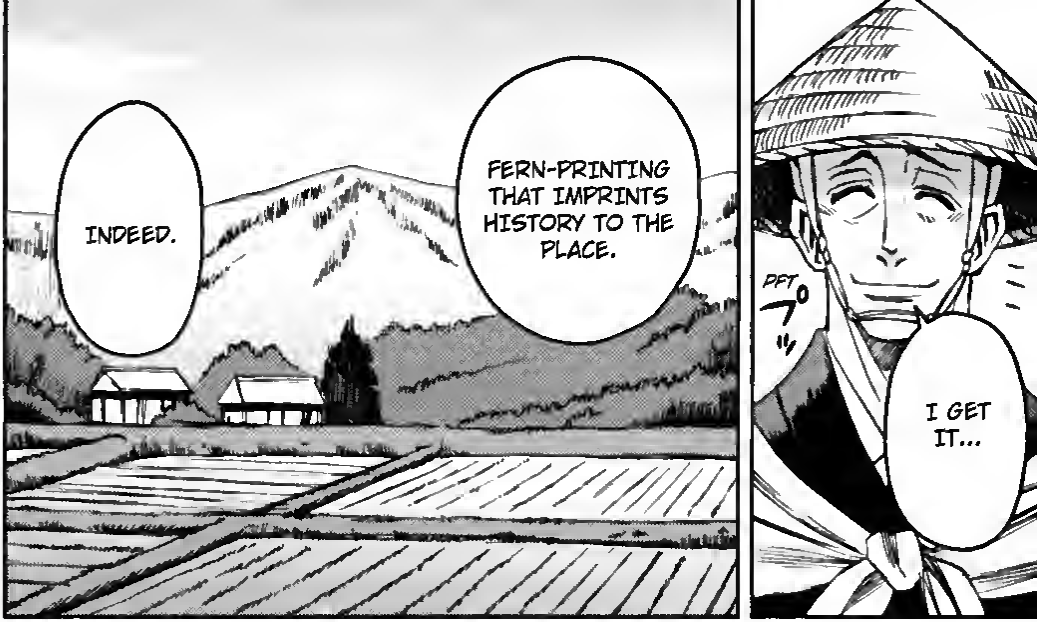

PLUCK
PLUCK
AHHH!
...PASSERSBY TRIED TO USE BARLEY TO PRINT PATTERNS ONTO THEIR FABRICS.
WHEN THIS ROCK USED TO BE LAYING BY THE BARLEY FIELD ON TOP THE MOUNTAIN...

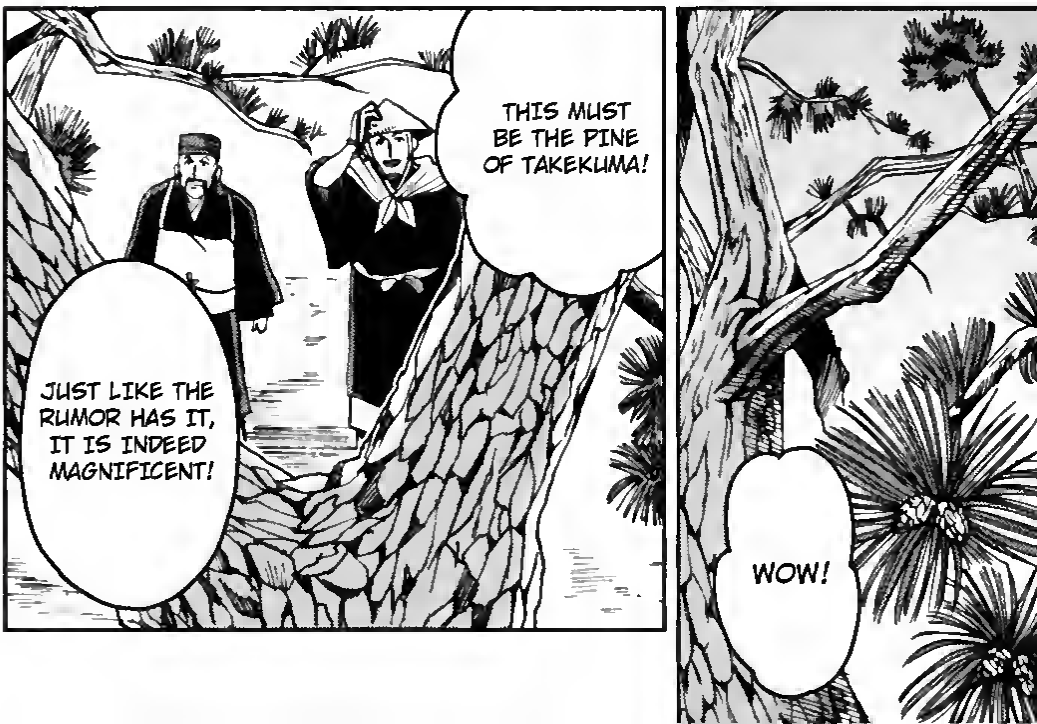
SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU AFTER COMING ALL THE WAY HERE!
おほほ
AHAHA
IS...IS THAT SO.

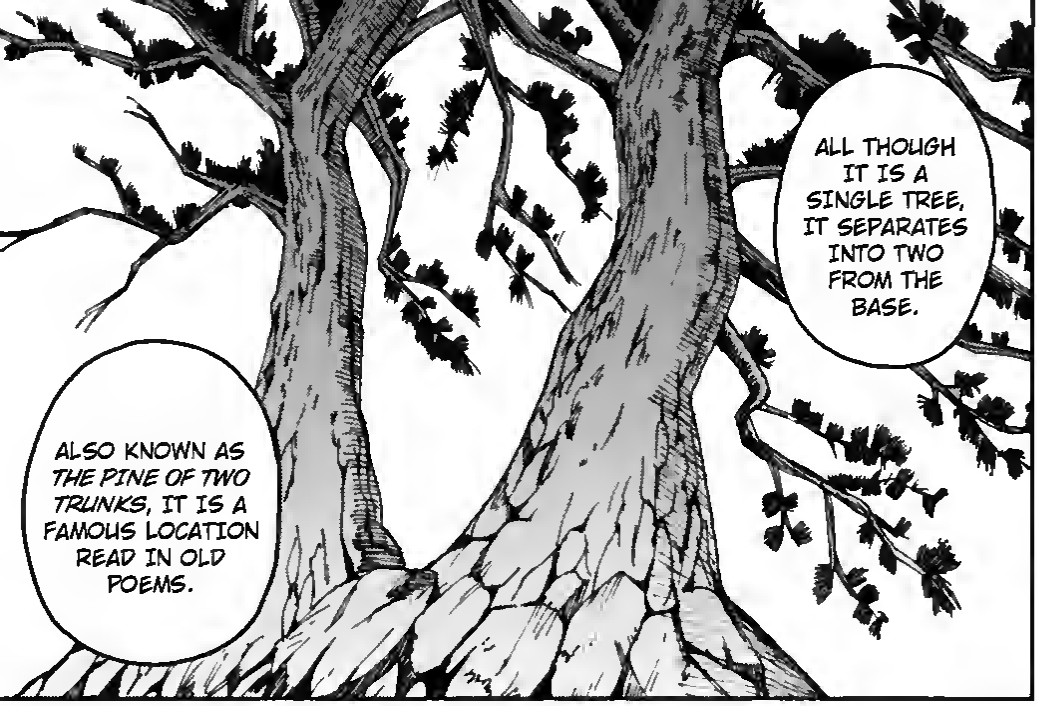
SKRAAAAAWWK


"PLANTING SEEDLINGS WITH THE HANDS - ANCIENT PATTERNS FROM THE FERN OF LONGING"
NOW WATCHING YOUNG GIRLS' HAND THAT ARE PLANTING SEEDLINGS MAKES ME THINK OF THE HANDS THAT USED TO MAKE FERN-PRINTS LONG AGO.

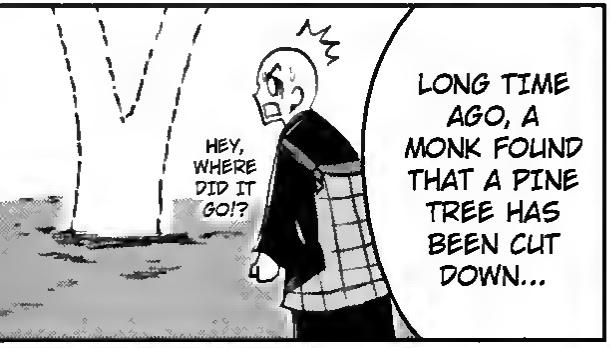
SORA.
I THOUGHT OF A VERSE.


INDEED.
FERN-PRINTING THAT IMPRINTS HISTORY TO THE PLACE.
PPT
I GET IT...

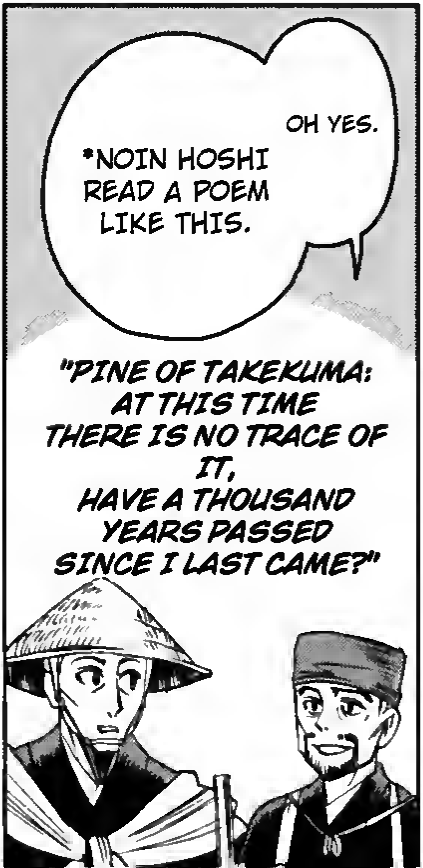

JUST LIKE THE RUMOR HAS IT, IT IS INDEED MAGNIFICENT!
THIS MUST BE THE PINE OF TAKEKUMA!
WOW!


ALL THOUGH IT IS A SINGLE TREE, IT SEPARATES INTO TWO FROM THE BASE.
ALSO KNOWN AS *THE PINE OF TWO TRUNKS*, IT IS A FAMOUS LOCATION READ IN OLD POEMS.

* NOIN HOSHI: MONK/POET OF THE MID HEIAN PERIOD.



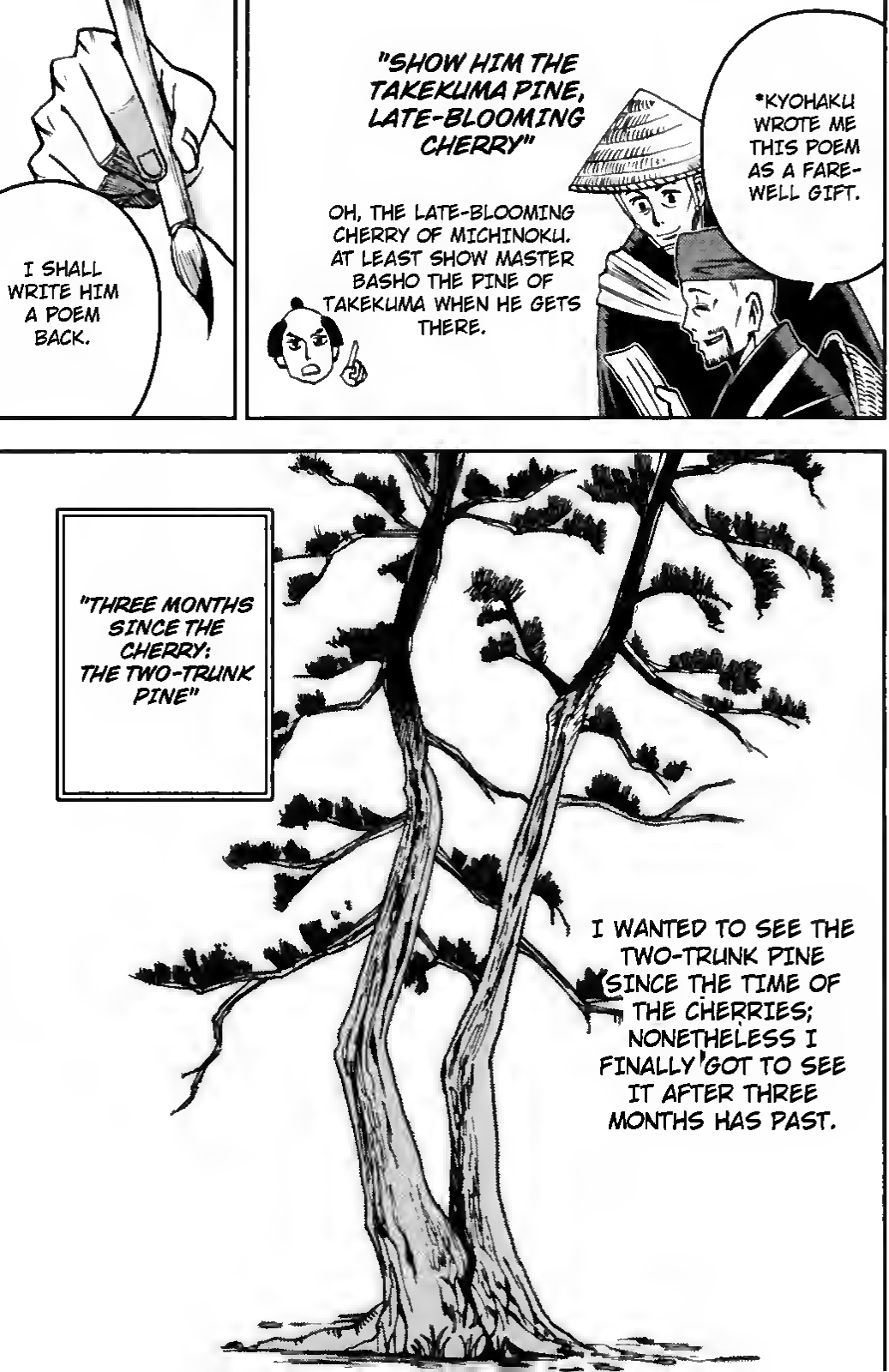
THE LIFE OF A PINE TREE IS SAID TO LAST A THOUSAND YEARS...
...BUT HAS IT BEEN A THOUSAND YEARS SINCE THE LAST TIME I WAS HERE!?
HOW DARE YOU CUT IT DOWN!
...SO HE WROTE IN HIS POEM.


OH YES.
*NOIN HOSHI READ A POEM LIKE THIS.
"PINE OF TAKEKUMA: AT THIS TIME THERE IS NO TRACE OF IT, HAVE A THOUSAND YEARS PASSED SINCE I LAST CAME?"

...I AM DEEPLY MOVED BY THE FACT THAT I AM ABLE TO SEE THE SAME TREE THAT IS TALKED ABOUT IN OLD POEMS RIGHT NOW.
THE TREE HAS BEEN CUT, REPLANTED, AND GONE THROUGH MANY GENERATIONS, BUT...

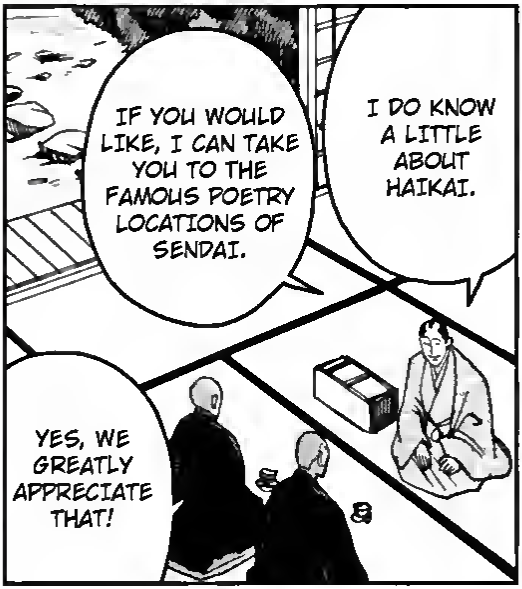
AT THIS MOMENT, WE ARE STANDING IN THE SAME SCENERY AS WHERE THE ANCIENT PEOPLE ALSO STOOD.

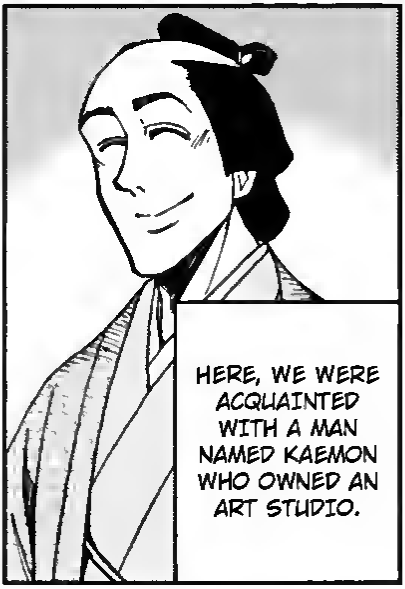
RUSTLE
OH YES.
I ALMOST FORGOT...

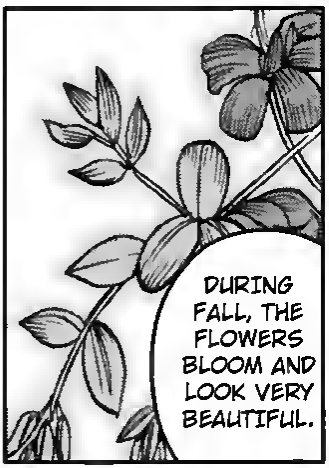

I SHALL WRITE HIM A POEM BACK.
"SHOW HIM THE TAKEKUMA PINE, LATE-BLOOMING CHERRY"
OH, THE LATE-BLOOMING CHERRY OF MICHINOKU. AT LEAST SHOW MASTER BASHO THE PINE OF TAKEKUMA WHEN HE GETS THERE.
*KYOHAKU WROTE ME THIS POEM AS A FAREWELL GIFT.
"THREE MONTHS SINCE THE CHERRY: THE TWO-TRUNK PINE"
I WANTED TO SEE THE TWO-TRUNK PINE SINCE THE TIME OF THE CHERRIES; NONETHELESS I FINALLY GOT TO SEE IT AFTER THREE MONTHS HAS PAST.

* KYOHAKU: ONE OF BASHO'S DISCIPLES. IT IS SAID THAT HE IS FROM TAKEKUMA.

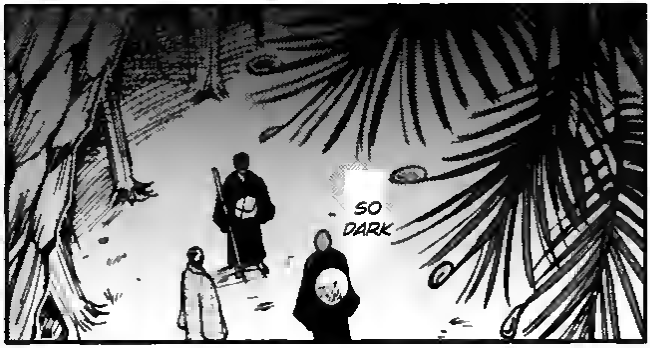
MAY
AFTER CROSSING THE NATORI RIVER, WE HAVE ARRIVED TO THE CASTLE TOWN OF SENDAI WHICH BELONGS TO THE GREAT DATE FAMILY.


IF YOU WOULD LIKE, I CAN TAKE YOU TO THE FAMOUS POETRY LOCATIONS OF SENDAI.
I DO KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT HAIKAI.
YES, WE GREATLY APPRECIATE THAT!

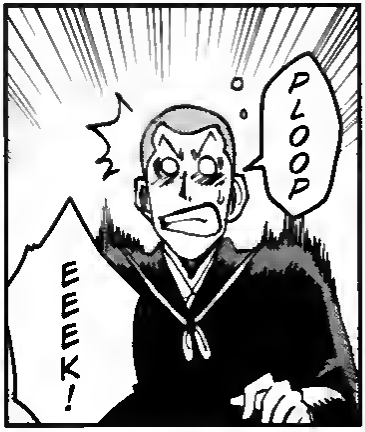

HERE, WE WERE ACQUAINTED WITH A MAN NAMED KAEMON WHO OWNED AN ART STUDIO.


DURING FALL, THE FLOWERS BLOOM AND LOOK VERY BEAUTIFUL.

HERE, WE'RE AT MIYAGINO, A PLACE FAMOUS FOR THE JAPANESE BUSH CLOVER.

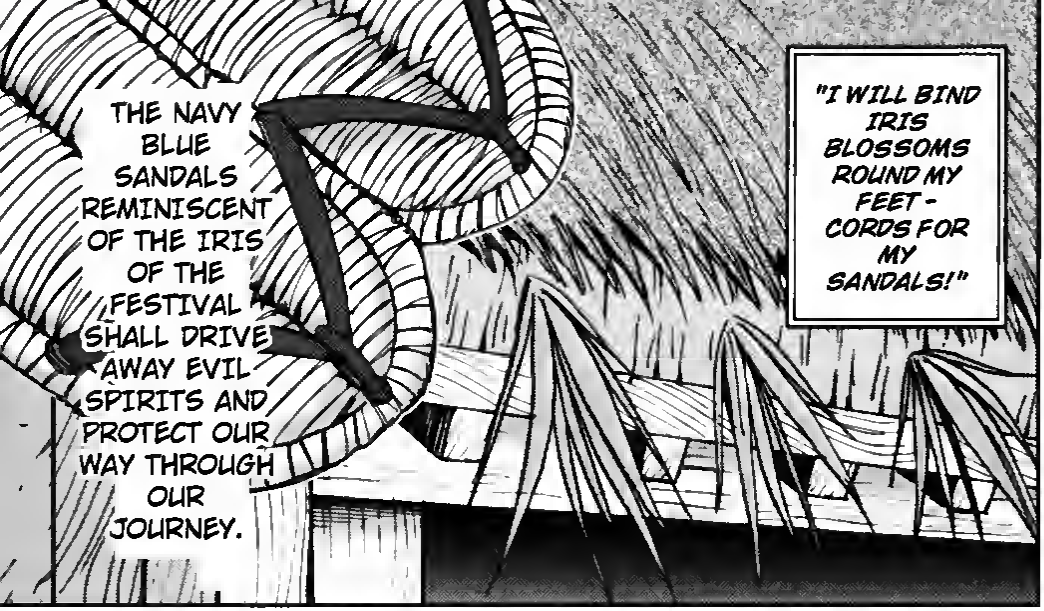


* "SERVANT, TELL YOUR LORD, 'UMBRELLA, SIR!' ...
FOR THE DEW UNDER THE TREES IN MIYAGINO IS WORSE THAN THE RAIN."
...IT CERTAINLY IS.
SORA, WHY DON'T WE LEARN FROM THE PAST AND WEAR OUR HATS.

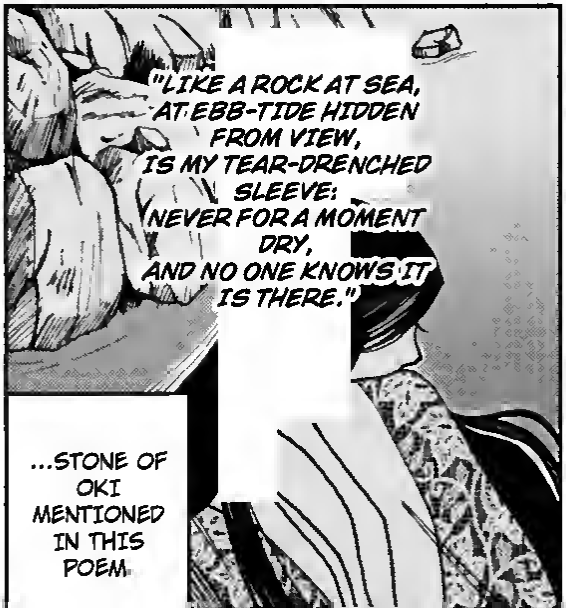


* SERVANT, TELL YOUR LORD...: OH SERVANT, YOU SHOULD TELL YOUR LORD TO HAVE HIM WEAR HIS HAT BECAUSE THE DEWS HERE ARE FAR WORSE THAN RAIN.

THIS IS A FAREWELL GIFT.
PLEASE HAVE A SAFE TRIP.
OH MY... THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR EVERYTHING.
...THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR SHOWING US AROUND.
THEY ARE SANDALS MADE WITH A NAVY BLUE CLOTH! TRULY TASTEFUL.
IT'S EXACTLY THE TIME OF THE IRIS FESTIVAL.
HE MUST HAVE REFLECTED UPON THE IRIS THAT IS PLANTED BY THE EAVES.
LET'S SEE...
WHAT COULD THE FAREWELL GIFT FROM MR. KAEMON BE?
OH!
TAKE A LOOK, SORA!


THE NAVY BLUE SANDALS REMINISCENT OF THE IRIS OF THE FESTIVAL SHALL DRIVE AWAY EVIL SPIRITS AND PROTECT OUR WAY THROUGH OUR JOURNEY.
"I WILL BIND IRIS BLOSSOMS ROUND MY FEET - CORDS FOR MY SANDALS!"

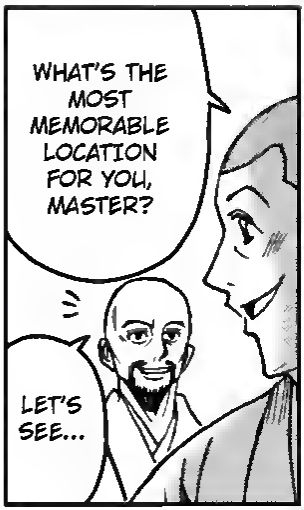
WE FURTHER TRAVELED TO VARIOUS OTHER FAMOUS POETRY LOCATIONS.

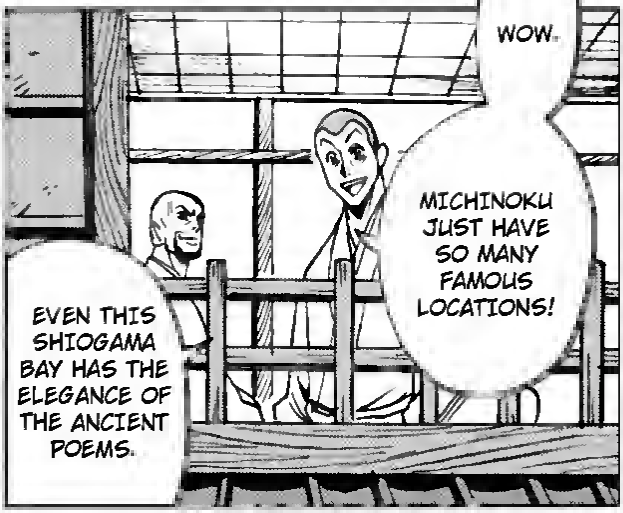

"LIKE A ROCK AT SEA, AT EBB-TIDE HIDDEN FROM VIEW, IS MY TEAR-DRENCHED SLEEVE: NEVER FOR A MOMENT DRY, AND NO ONE KNOWS IT IS THERE."
...STONE OF OKI MENTIONED IN THIS POEM.

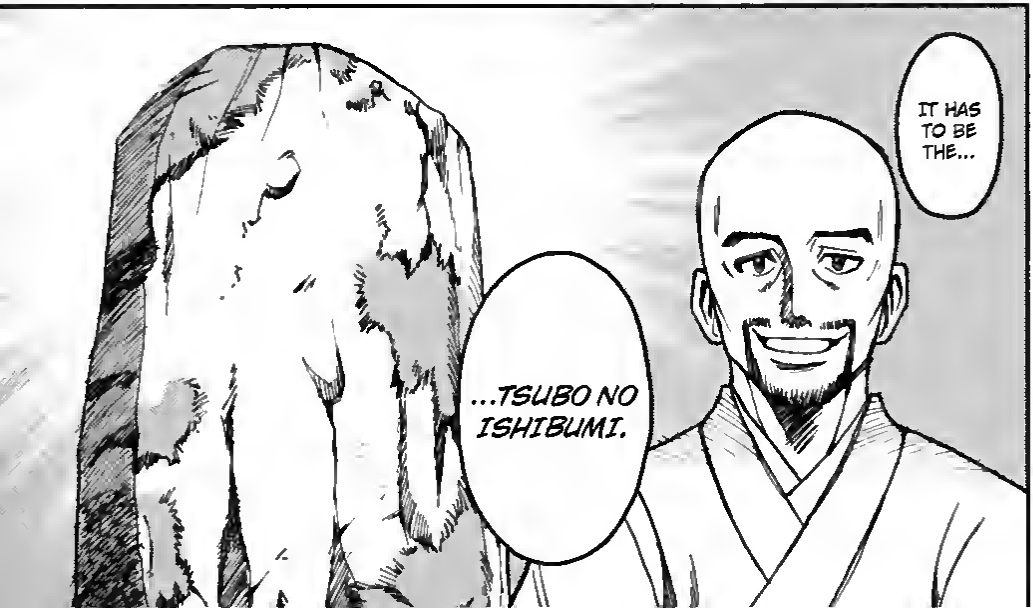
THE TAMA RIVER IN NODA, WHERE ANCIENT PEOPLE HEARD THE PLOVER CRY.

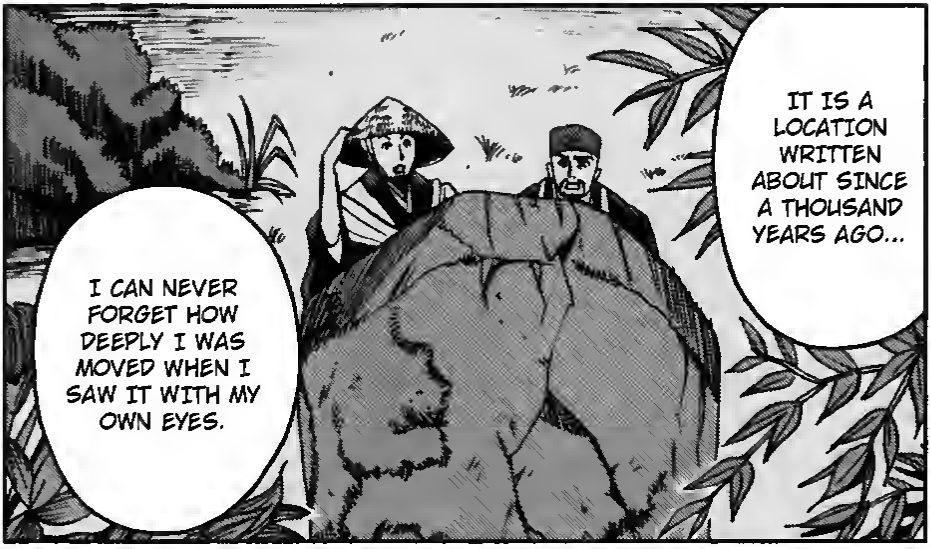
THE PINE MOUNTAIN OF SUE, LOCATED NORTH OF THE STONE OF OKI...
HUH?
THERE'S A CEMETERY INSIDE THE PINE GROVE!
THE PINE MOUNTAIN OF SUE USED TO BE WHERE LOVERS PROMISED THEIR ETERNAL LOVE FOR EACH OTHER...
THIS IS QUITE DEPRESSING.
* "SHOULD I BE UNFAITHFUL AND LEAVE YOU...
...MAY THE WAVES RISE AND SWALLOW UP THE PINES OF MOUNT FOREVER."
...RIGHT?
I GUESS IT JUST MEANS THAT...EVEN LOVERS WOULD END UP IN THE GRAVE LIKE THIS.
HAHA...
I THINK ANY PERSON WOULD END UP IN A GRAVE IN THE END

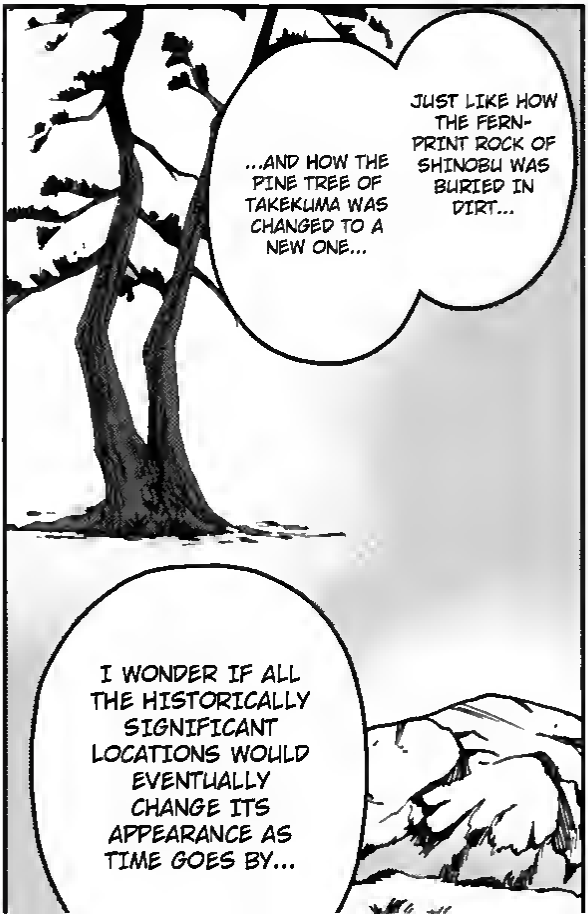
* SHOULD I BE UNFAITHFUL... JUST LIKE HOW THE WAVES WILL NEVER GET TO THE PINE MOUNTAIN OF SUE, I WILL NEVER BE UNFAITHFUL.


WHAT'S THE MOST MEMORABLE LOCATION FOR YOU, MASTER?
LET'S SEE...

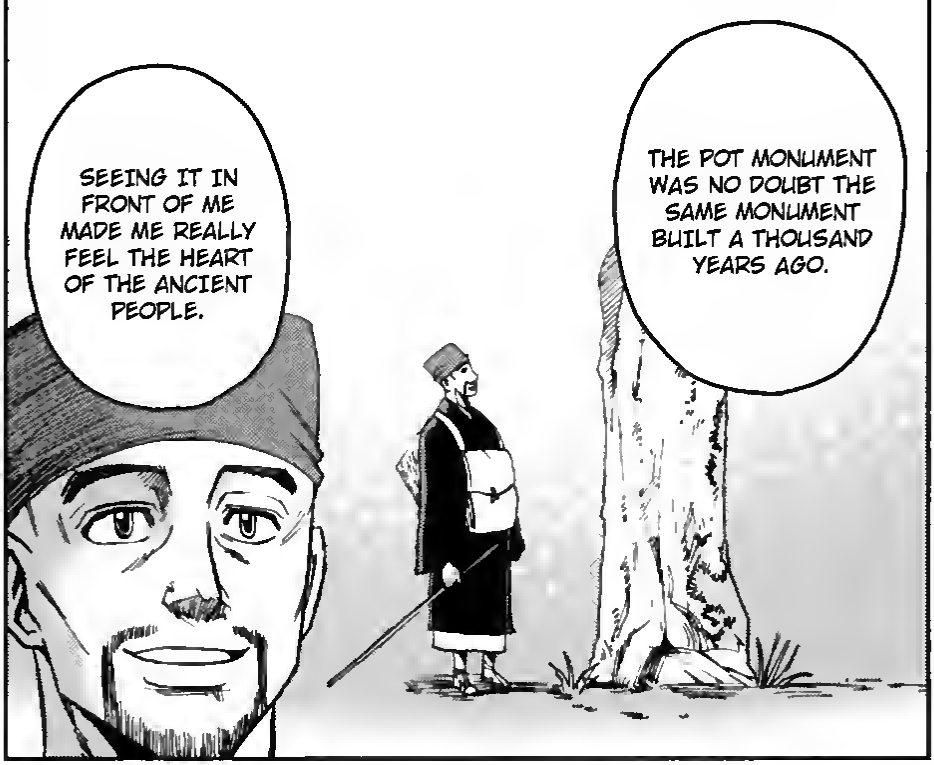

WOW.
MICHINOKU JUST HAVE SO MANY FAMOUS LOCATIONS!
EVEN THIS SHIOGAMA BAY HAS THE ELEGANCE OF THE ANCIENT POEMS.

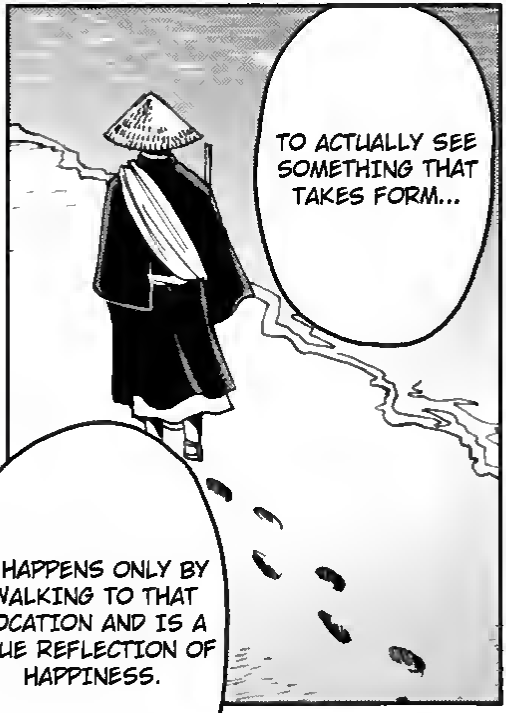

IT HAS TO BE THE...
...TSUBO NO ISHIBUMI.


I CAN NEVER FORGET HOW DEEPLY I WAS MOVED WHEN I SAW IT WITH MY OWN EYES.
IT IS A LOCATION WRITTEN ABOUT SINCE A THOUSAND YEARS AGO...

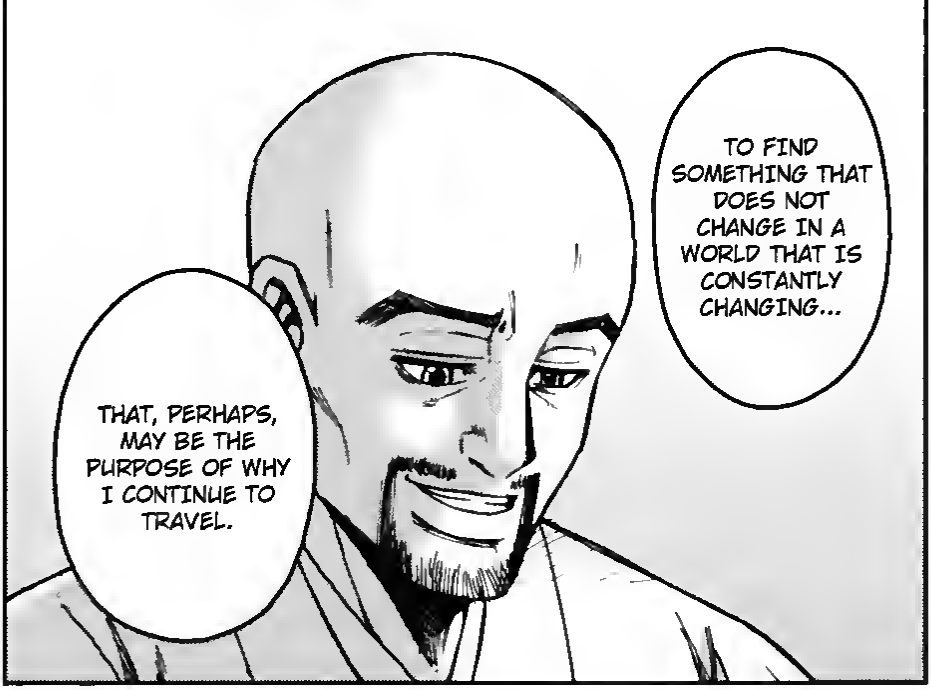

...AND HOW THE PINE TREE OF TAKEKUMA WAS CHANGED TO A NEW ONE...
JUST LIKE HOW THE FERN-PRINT ROCK OF SHINOBU WAS BURIED IN DIRT...
I WONDER IF ALL THE HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT LOCATIONS WOULD EVENTUALLY CHANGE ITS APPEARANCE AS TIME GOES BY...

ALL THOUGH IT WAS MOSS-COVERED, IT STILL HAD A SENSE OF DIGNITY.
YES...

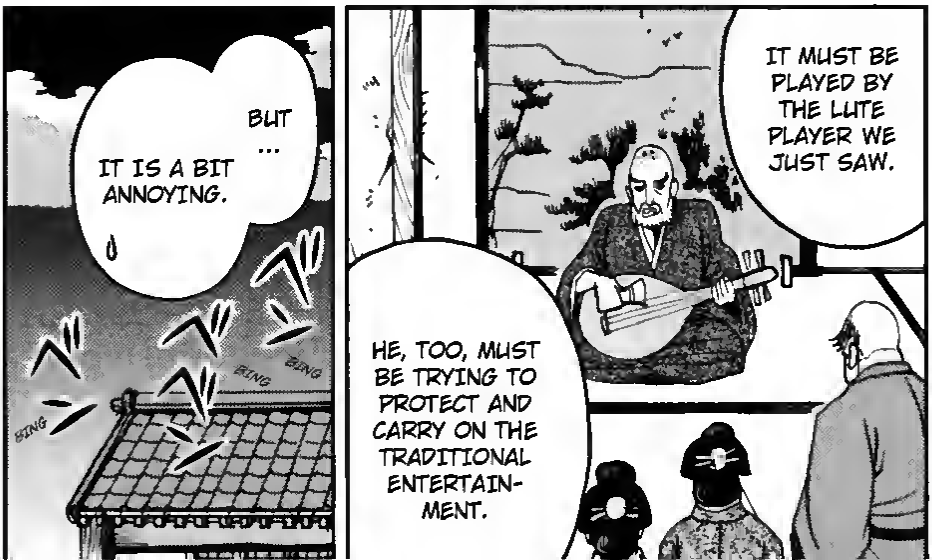

THE POT MONUMENT WAS NO DOUBT THE SAME MONUMENT BUILT A THOUSAND YEARS AGO.
SEEING IT IN FRONT OF ME MADE ME REALLY FEEL THE HEART OF THE ANCIENT PEOPLE.

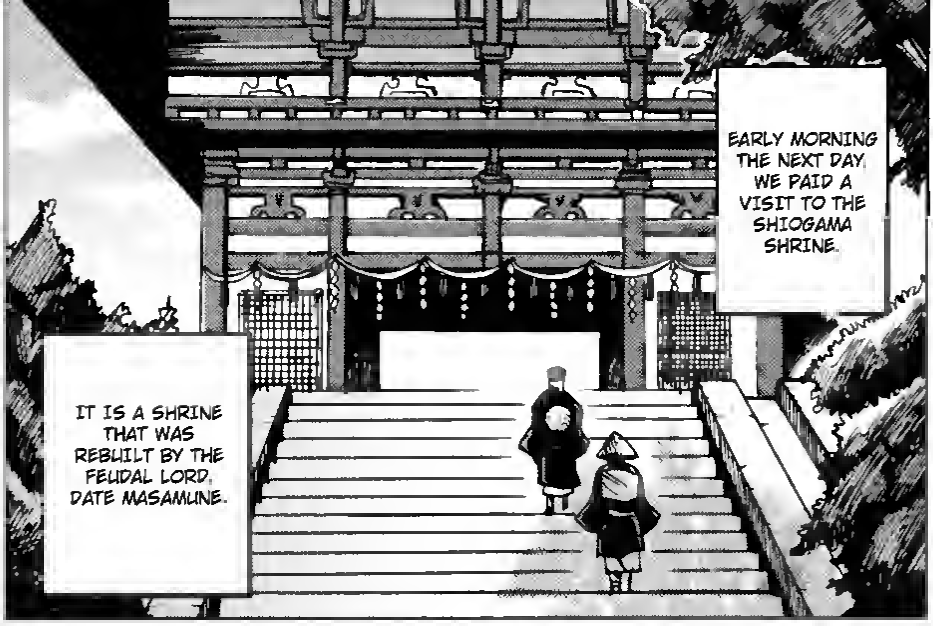

TO ACTUALLY SEE SOMETHING THAT TAKES FORM...
...HAPPENS ONLY BY WALKING TO THAT LOCATION AND IS A TRUE REFLECTION OF HAPPINESS.

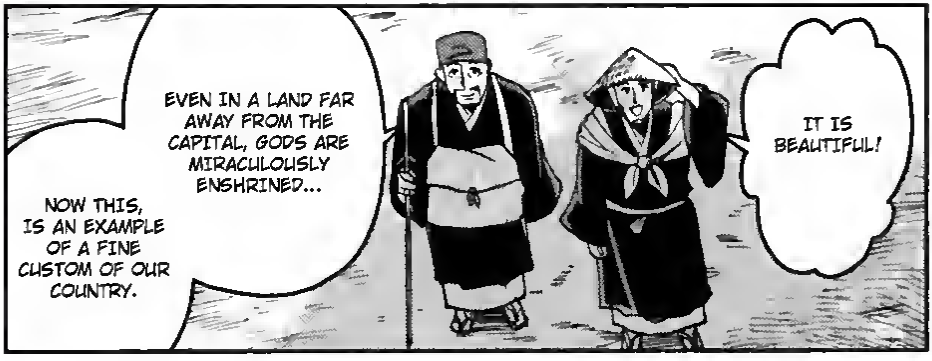
EVEN IF SOMETHING LACKS FORM, ONE CAN STILL RECOLLECT THE DEEP THOUGHTS THAT WERE PUT INTO IT...
...AND ONE CAN STILL READ THE POEMS WITHOUT ACTUALLY SEEING THE LOCATION.
HOWEVER ...

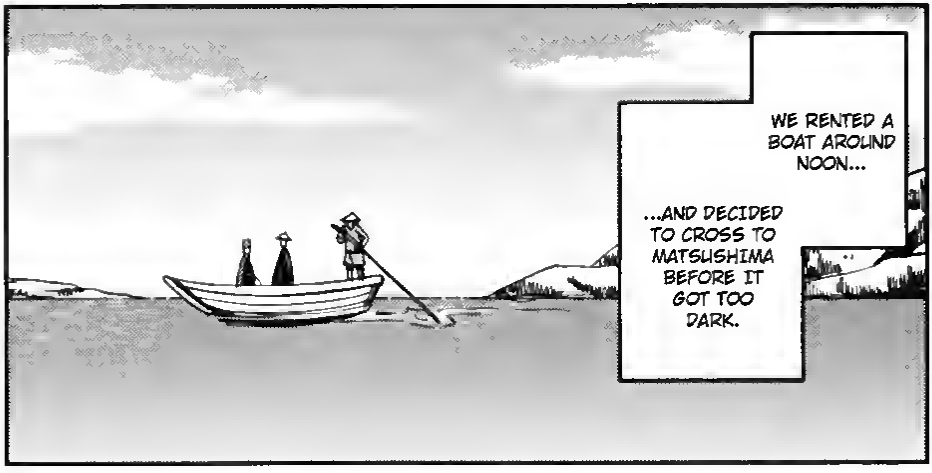

TO FIND SOMETHING THAT DOES NOT CHANGE IN A WORLD THAT IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING...
THAT, PERHAPS, MAY BE THE PURPOSE OF WHY I CONTINUE TO TRAVEL.

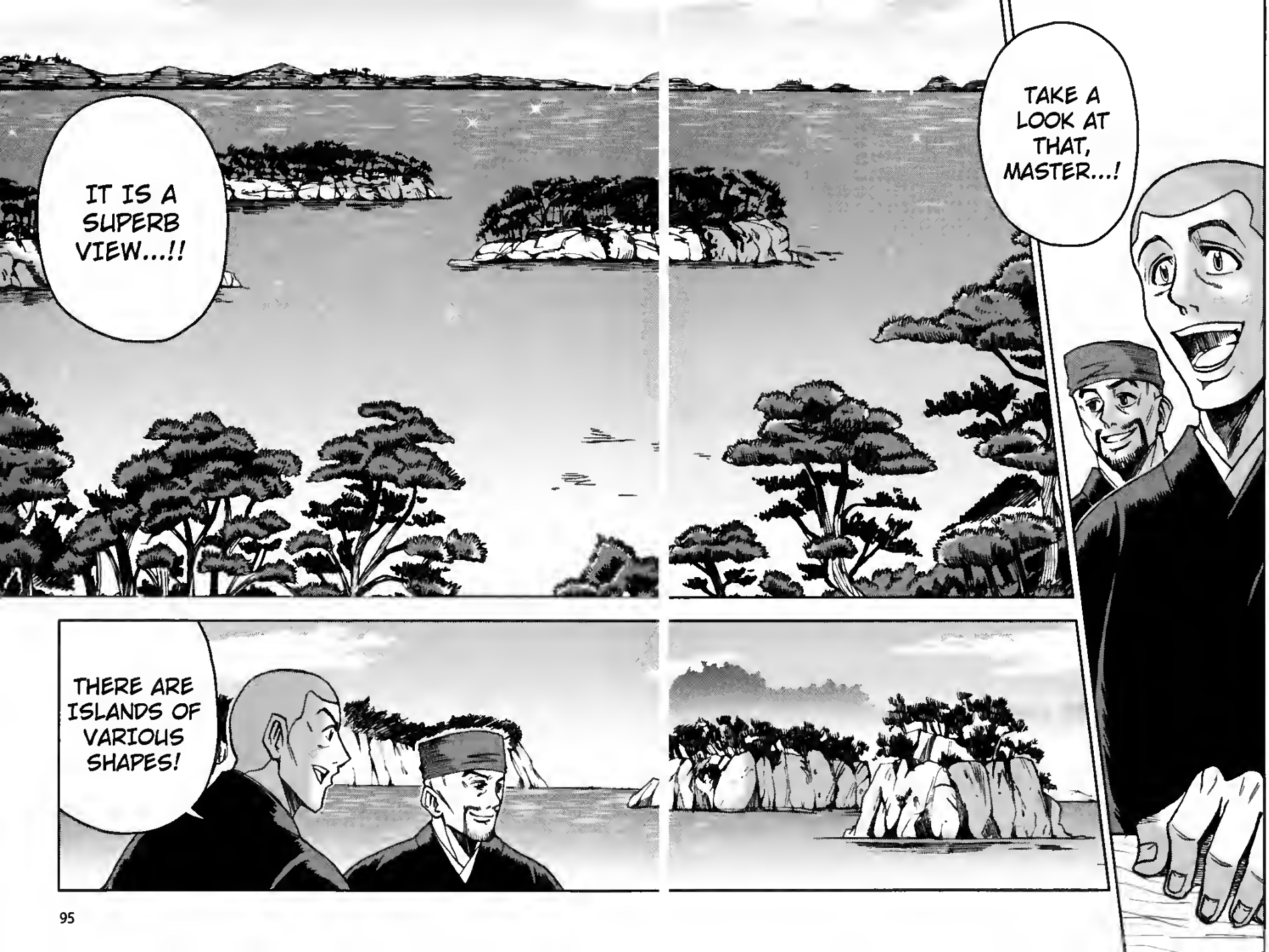
HM...
BING
BING
IT'S THE OKU-JORURI.


IT MUST BE PLAYED BY THE LUTE PLAYER WE JUST SAW.
HE, TOO, MUST BE TRYING TO PROTECT AND CARRY ON THE TRADITIONAL ENTERTAIN-MENT.
BUT ...
IT IS A BIT ANNOYING.
BING
BING
BING

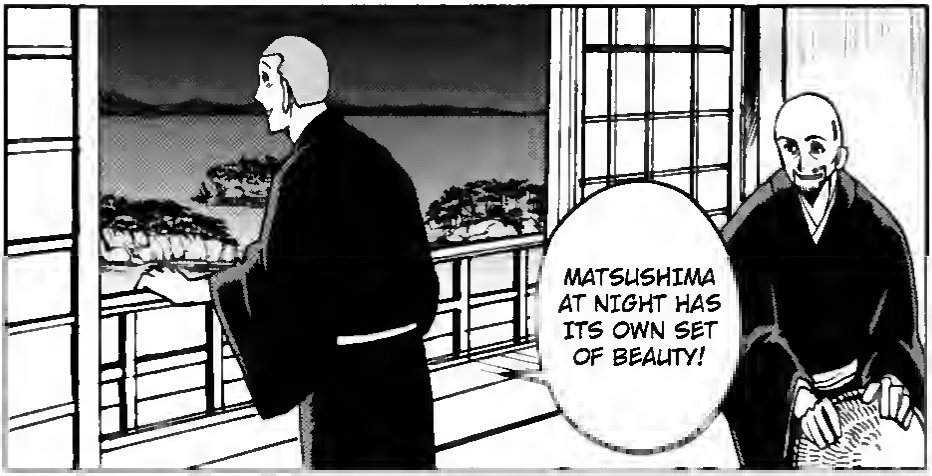

EARLY MORNING THE NEXT DAY, WE PAID A VISIT TO THE SHIOGAMA SHRINE.
IT IS A SHRINE THAT WAS REBUILT BY THE FEUDAL LORD, DATE MASAMUNE.

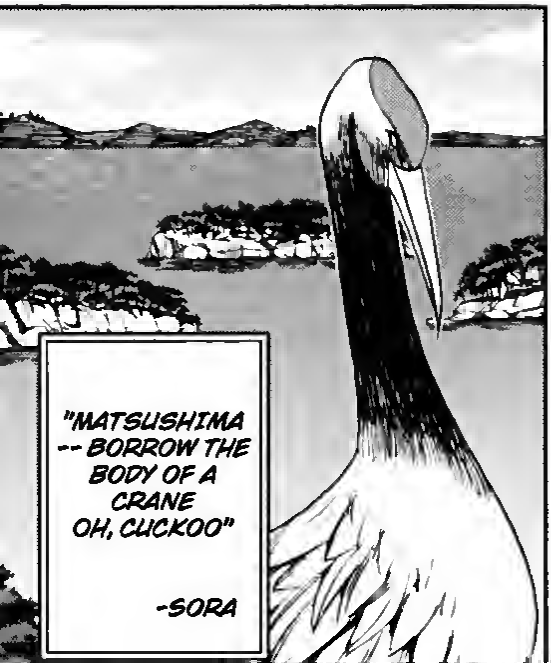

NOW THIS, IS AN EXAMPLE OF A FINE CUSTOM OF OUR COUNTRY.
EVEN IN A LAND FAR AWAY FROM THE CAPITAL, GODS ARE MIRACULOUSLY ENSHRINED...
IT IS BEAUTIFUL!

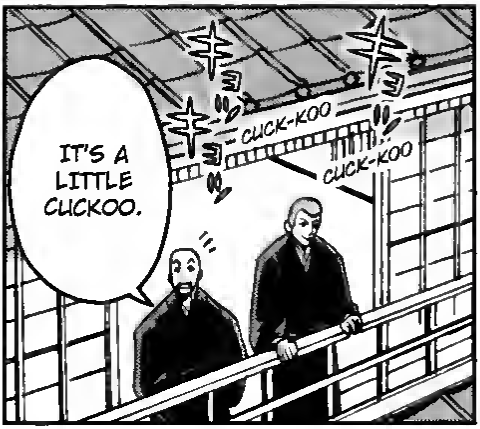

WE RENTED A BOAT AROUND NOON...
...AND DECIDED TO CROSS TO MATSUSHIMA BEFORE IT GOT TOO DARK.

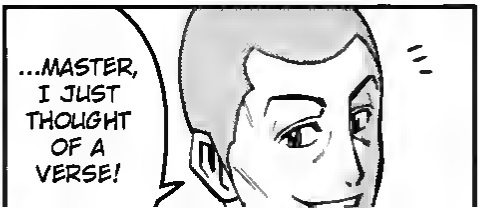

IT IS A SUPERB VIEW...!!
TAKE A LOOK AT THAT, MASTER...!
THERE ARE ISLANDS OF VARIOUS SHAPES!

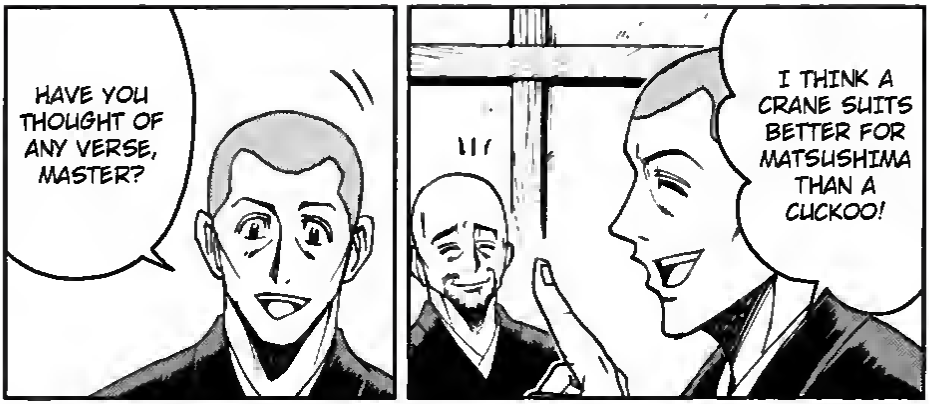
THAT ONE LOOKS LIKE IT'S CARRYING A CHILD ON ITS BACK!
TALL ONES THAT ARE POINTING TO THE SKY...
THE BRANCH ON THE PINE TREES ON THE ISLAND LOOKS EXCELLENT AS WELL.
ONE THAT LAY FLAT ON THE WAVES...
...NOW THIS IS TRULY THE WORK OF GOD...!
HOW CAN ANYONE FULLY EXPRESS THROUGH PAINTINGS...
...AND LITERATURE, THE MOTHER NATURE CREATED BY GOD...

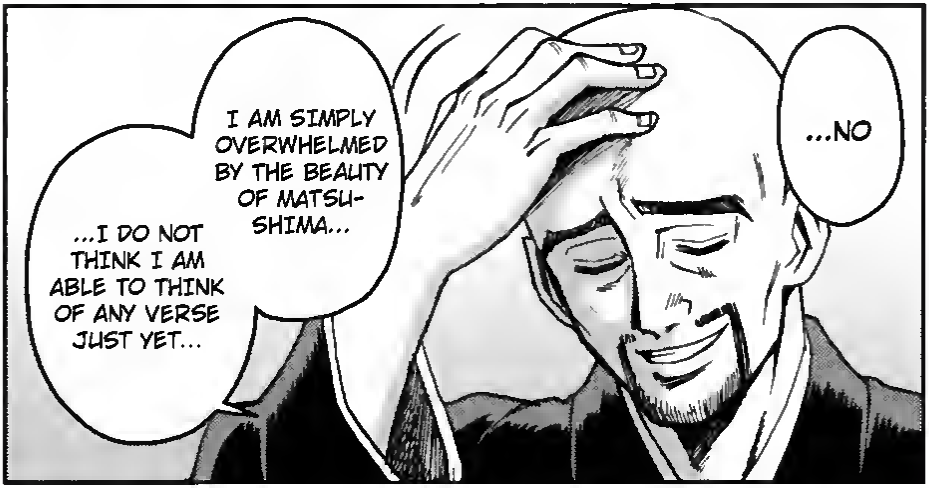

MATSUSHIMA AT NIGHT HAS ITS OWN SET OF BEAUTY!


"MATSUSHIMA -- BORROW THE BODY OF A CRANE OH, CUCKOO"
-SORA

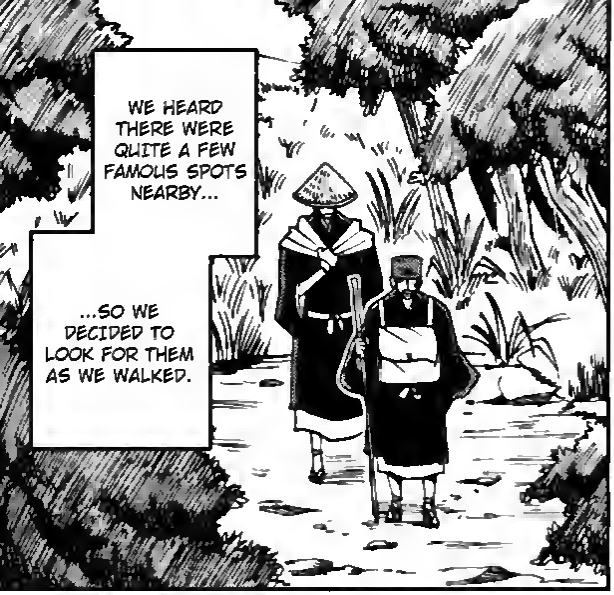

IT'S A LITTLE CUCKOO.
CUCK-KOO
CUCK-KOO


...MASTER, I JUST THOUGHT OF A VERSE!


HAVE YOU THOUGHT OF ANY VERSE, MASTER?
I THINK A CRANE SUITS BETTER FOR MATSUSHIMA THAN A CUCKOO!


...I DO NOT THINK I AM ABLE TO THINK OF ANY VERSE JUST YET...
I AM SIMPLY OVERWHELMED BY THE BEAUTY OF MATSU-SHIMA...
...NO

...AND I SPENT MY SLEEPLESS NIGHT READING VERSES AND POEMS ABOUT MATSUSHIMA WRITTEN BY MY FRIENDS.
EVEN AFTER DARK, MY HEART HAS NOT YET SETTLED...


WE HEARD THERE WERE QUITE A FEW FAMOUS SPOTS NEARBY...
...SO WE DECIDED TO LOOK FOR THEM AS WE WALKED.

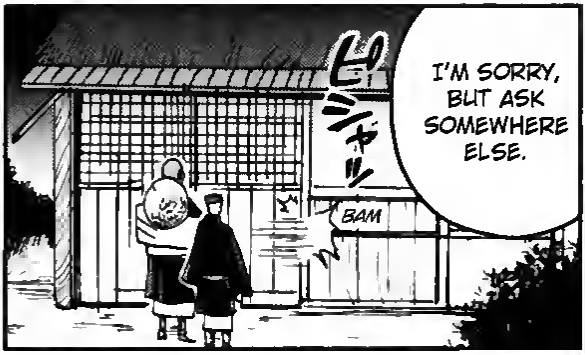
MAY 12TH
WE LEFT MATSUSHIMA AND HEADED FOR HIRAIZUMI.

THE ROAD IS BECOMING MORE STEEP.
ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE RIGHT WAY?
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

BUT AS WE WENT THROUGH ROADS THAT SEEM LIKE MAN NEVER SET HIS FOOT ON...
MASTER ...

...HMM IT SEEMS LIKE...
...WE ARE LOST.
WHAT!?

MASTER!
THERE'S SMOKE!!
AH!
I HEARD THAT WE CAN FIND THE PINE OF ANEHA AND THE BRIDGE OF ODAE, BUT...
HOW PECULIAR ...
THERE MUST BE HOUSES NEARBY.
LET'S JUST TRY TO GET OVER THERE!
うむ
WE HAVE NO CHOICE.


I'M SORRY, BUT ASK SOMEWHERE ELSE.
BAM

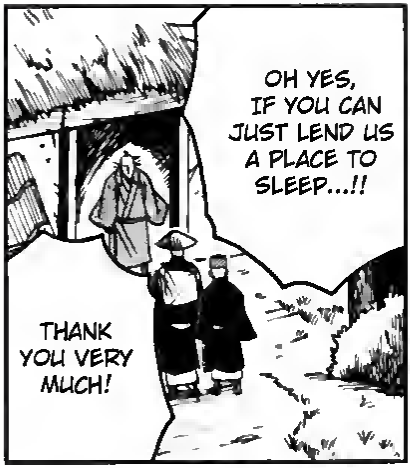
TRAVELING POETS?
YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO STAY?

はぁ…
SIGH
HM...
...THEY TURNED US DOWN AGAIN...

I GUESS THIS PLACE IS CALLED ISHINOMAKI ...
THE PEOPLE HERE ARE BIT COLD FOR SUCH A LIVELY TOWN.
THEY PROBABLY DO NOT WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH PEOPLE OF UNKNOWN IDENTITY...

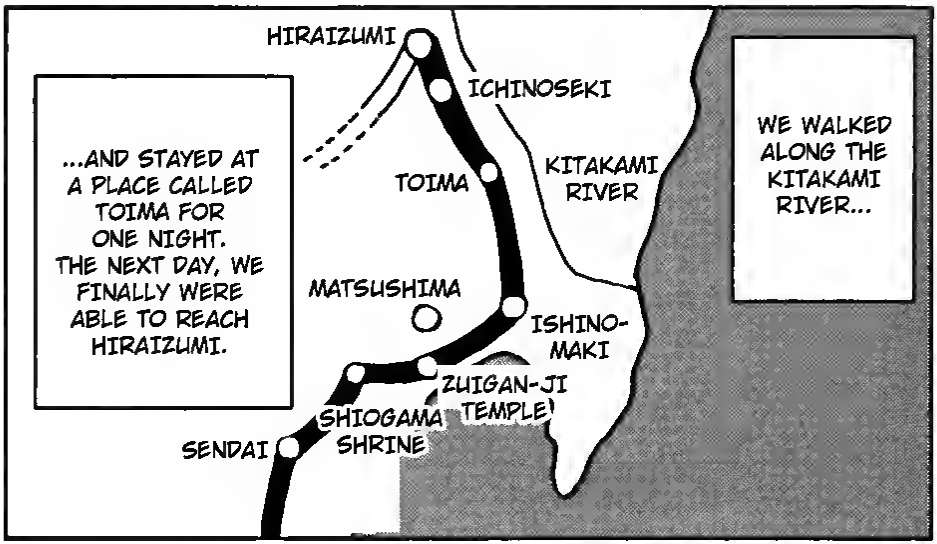
HUH?
...HOW ABOUT THERE, SORA?
BUT THAT LEAVES US WITH ONLY ONE PLACE TO ASK FOR SHELTER...

RUN
DOWN
TH...
THERE...!?

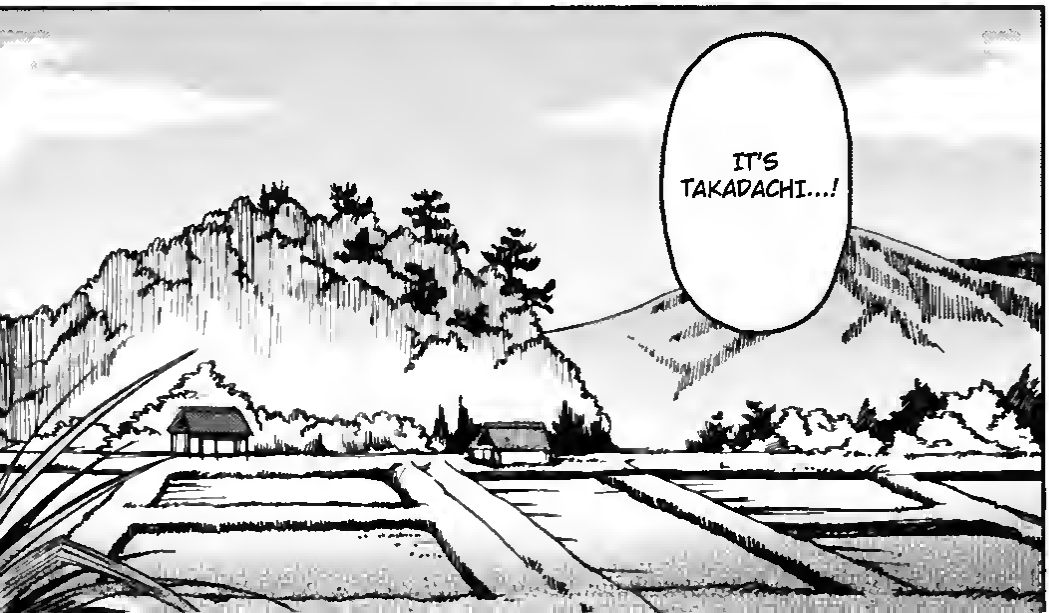

OH YES, IF YOU CAN JUST LEND US A PLACE TO SLEEP...!!
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

YOU'RE ASKING IF YOU CAN STAY?
I DON'T GOT MUCH, BUT IF YOU'RE ALL RIGHT WITH THAT...

はー
SIGH
WE SHOULD SOMEHOW HEAD TOWARDS HIRAIZUMI AGAIN TOMORROW.
I GUESS NOW WE CAN PASS THE NIGHT SAFELY...


HIRAIZUMI
ICHINOSEKI
TOIMA
KITAKAMI RIVER
MATSUSHIMA
ISHINO-MAKI
ZUIGAN-JI TEMPLE
SHIOGAMA SHRINE
SENDAI
...AND STAYED AT A PLACE CALLED TOIMA FOR ONE NIGHT. THE NEXT DAY, WE FINALLY WERE ABLE TO REACH HIRAIZUMI.
WE WALKED ALONG THE KITAKAMI RIVER...

WE ARE FINALLY HERE...


IT'S TAKADACHI...!

YES.
ESCAPING TO HIRAIZUMI, THIS IS WHERE YOSHITSUNE WAS HIDDEN.

TAKADACHI ...
THIS IS WHERE MINAMOTO-NO-YOSHITSUNE'S PALACE USED TO BE.

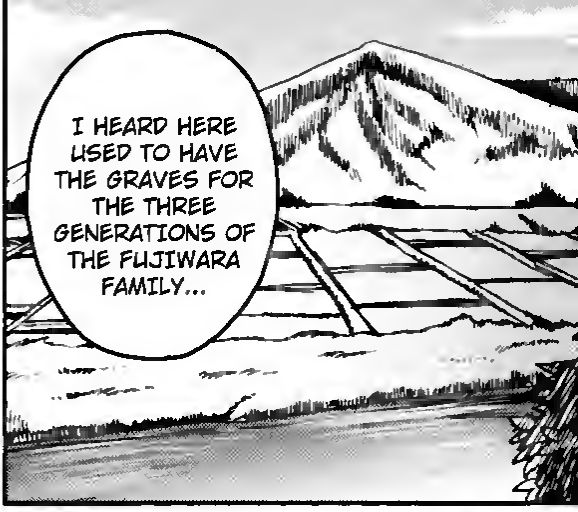
AND THIS IS ALSO WHERE THE HERO OF THE MINAMOTO CLAN DIED HIS VIOLENT DEATH.

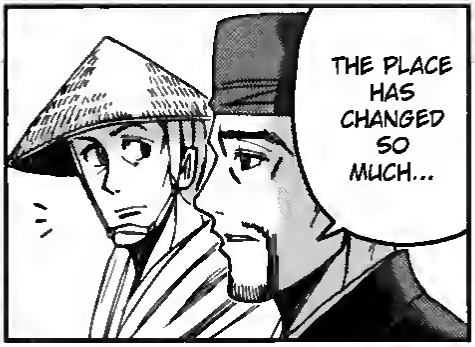
...LET'S CLIMB UP THE TAKADACHI.
AH. IT'S NOTHING.
MASTER?

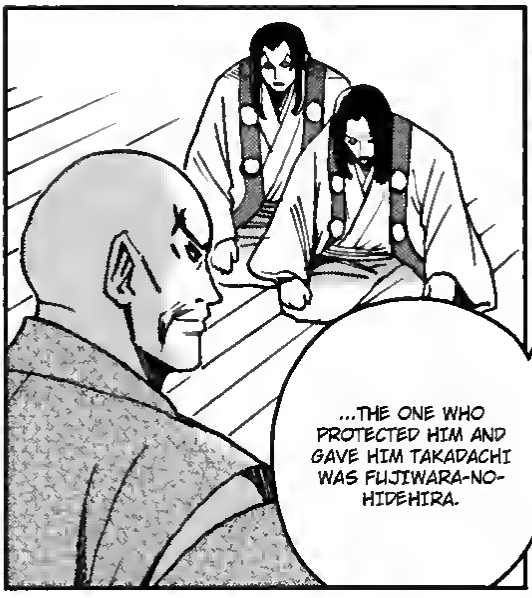
YOU CAN HAVE A GREAT VIEW OF THE KITAKAMI RIVER...!

OH!

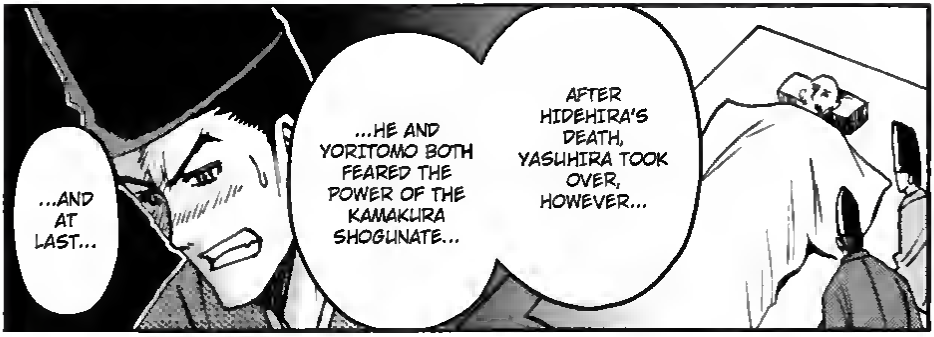
THE THREE GENERATIONS OF THE FUJIWARA FAMILY. MEANING...
FUJIWARA-NO-KIYOHIRA
MOTOHIRA
... AND HIDEHIRA.
THEY WERE THE POWERFUL CLAN THAT CREATED A METROPOLIS HERE IN HIRAIZUMI.

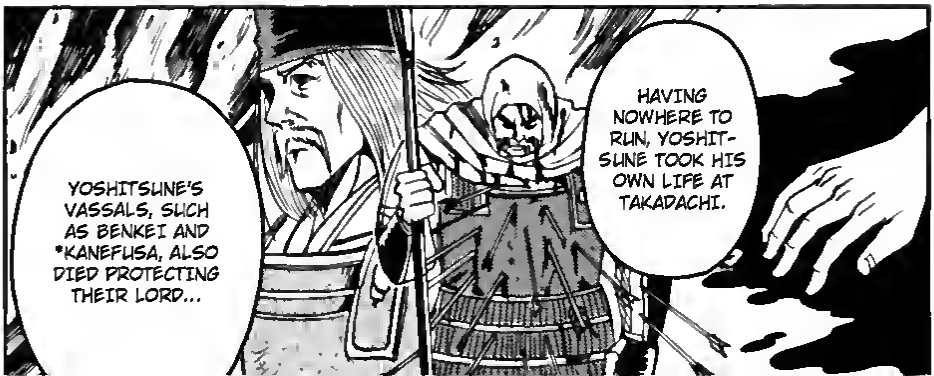

I HEARD HERE USED TO HAVE THE GRAVES FOR THE THREE GENERATIONS OF THE FUJIWARA FAMILY...


THE PLACE HAS CHANGED SO MUCH...

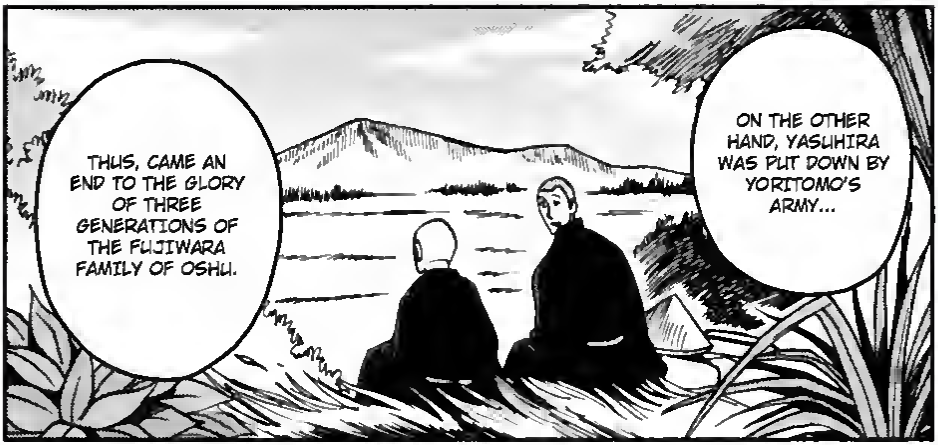

...THE ONE WHO PROTECTED HIM AND GAVE HIM TAKADACHI WAS FUJIWARA-NO-HIDEHIRA.

LONG AGO, WHEN YOSHITSUNE RAN AWAY FROM HIS BROTHER, YORITOMO'S, MEN...
THAT'S RIGHT.

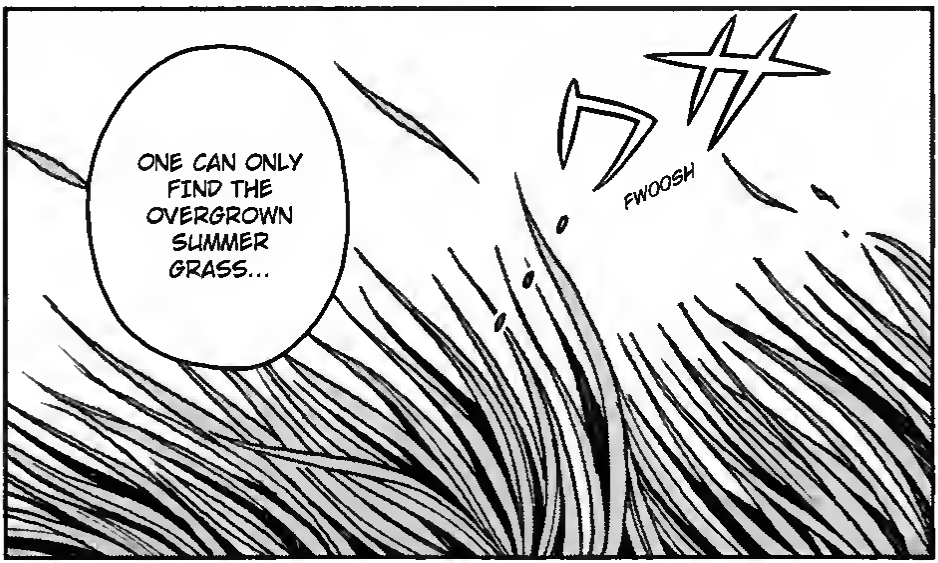

AFTER HIDEHIRA'S DEATH, YASUHIRA TOOK OVER, HOWEVER...
...HE AND YORITOMO BOTH FEARED THE POWER OF THE KAMAKURA SHOGUNATE...
...AND AT LAST...


HAVING NOWHERE TO RUN, YOSHITSUNE TOOK HIS OWN LIFE AT TAKADACHI.
YOSHITSUNE'S VASSALS, SUCH AS BENKEI AND *KANEFUSA, ALSO DIED PROTECTING THEIR LORD...

* KANEFUSA: IT IS SAID THAT HE WAS ONE OF YOSHITSUNE'S LOYAL VASSAL WHO FOUGHT WITH HIM AT TAKADACHI UNTIL THE END.

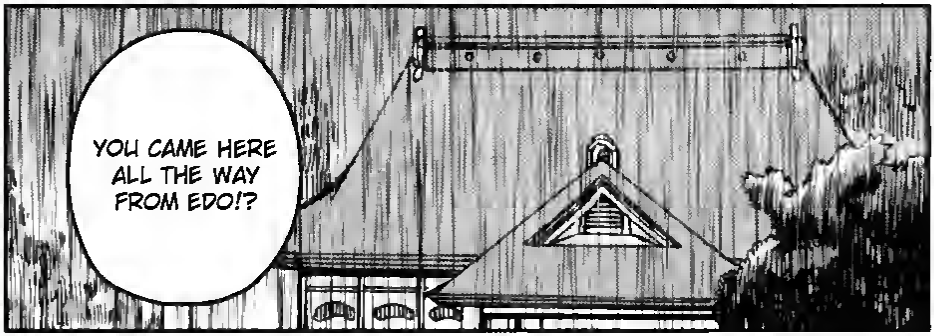

THUS, CAME AN END TO THE GLORY OF THREE GENERATIONS OF THE FUJIWARA FAMILY OF OSHU.
ON THE OTHER HAND, YASUHIRA WAS PUT DOWN BY YORITOMO'S ARMY...

...NOT A SINGLE TRACE OF IT REMAINS TODAY...
...AND THE TRAGEDY THAT KILLED YOSHITSUNE AND HIS LOYAL MEN...
THE STORY OF THEIR RISE AND FALL...


ONE CAN ONLY FIND THE OVERGROWN SUMMER GRASS...
FWOOSH

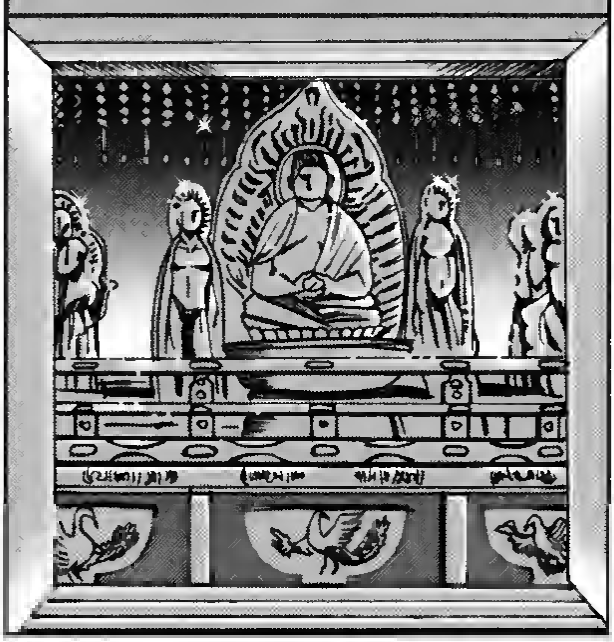
"THE SUMMER GRASSES— FOR MANY BRAVE WARRIORS THE AFTERMATH OF DREAMS."
THIS IS WHERE LONG AGO, WARRIORS LIKE YOSHITSUNE AND HIS MEN AND FUJIWARA'S CLAN ONCE DREAMT OF FAME AND GLORY. BUT NOW, THEY ALL CEASE TO EXIST AND ONE CAN ONLY FIND OVERGROWN SUMMER GRASSES.

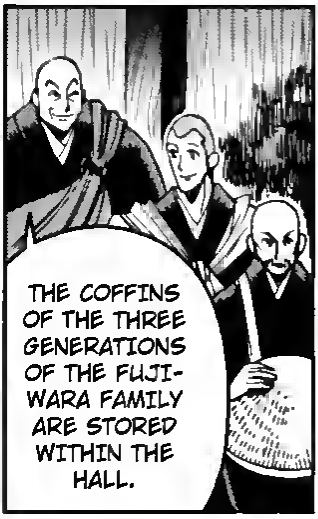
NEXT, WE DECIDED TO TAKE A LOOK AT CHUSON-JI TEMPLE'S HALL OF LIGHT , WHICH WE'VE BEEN HEARING THAT IT IS ABSOLUTELY MARVELOUS.
PLOP
FSHHHHHHHH
IT'S POURING NOW...
AN EARLY SUMMER RAIN...
IT BLURS THE GREEN OF MIYAMA.

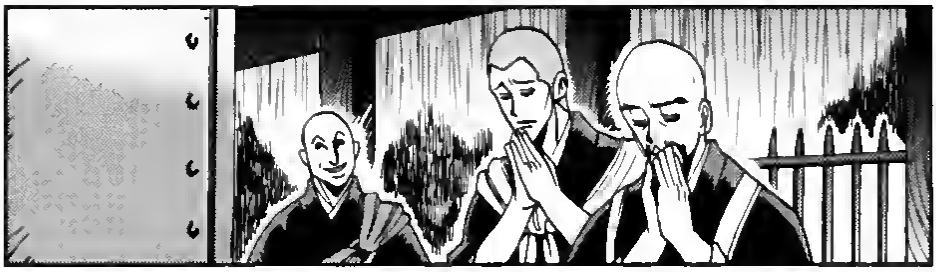

YOU CAME HERE ALL THE WAY FROM EDO!?

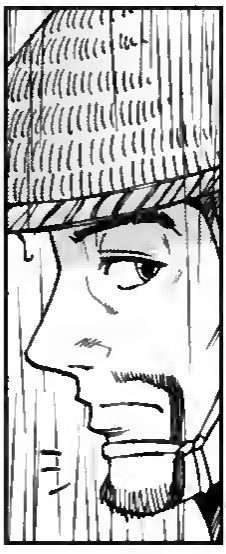
YES, WE REALLY WANTED TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE HALL OF LIGHT.
PWLING
LET ME SHOW YOU THE WAY AT ONCE.
IS THAT SO...

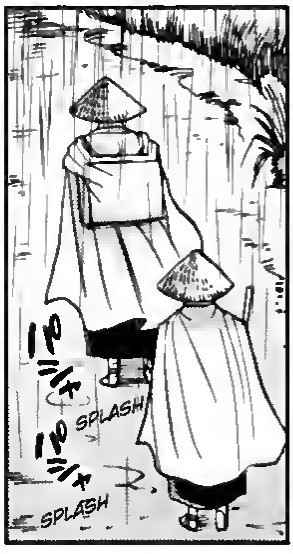
PLEASE, TAKE A LOOK AT THE MAIN HALL.
THIS WAY PLEASE.
THE MAIN HALL OF THE HALL OF LIGHT IS SITUATED WITHIN THE OUTER SAYADO IN ORDER TO AVOID THE RAIN AND WIND.
OOH...
IT IS ALL COVERED IN GOLD...!
IT REALLY IS A HALL BRIGHT AS LIGHT...!!

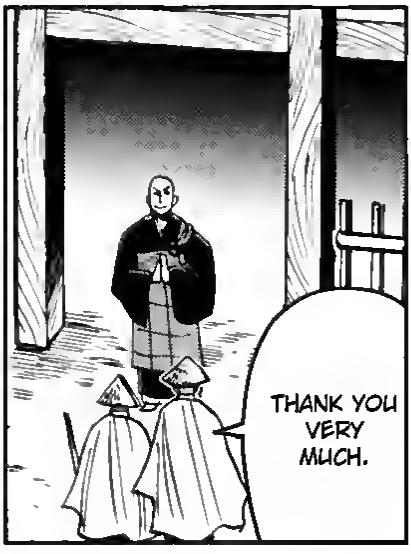



THE COFFINS OF THE THREE GENERATIONS OF THE FUJI-WARA FAMILY ARE STORED WITHIN THE HALL.

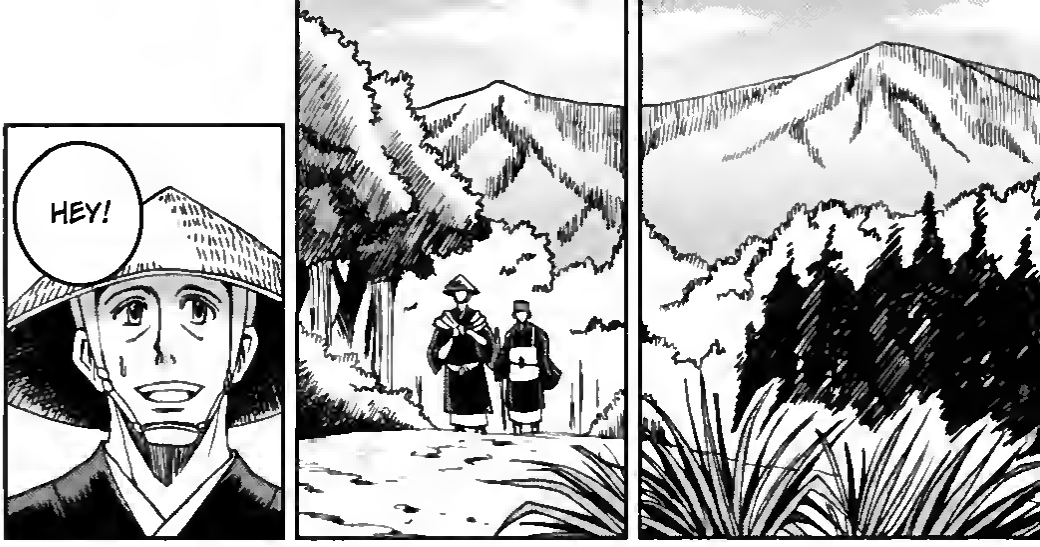





SPLASH
SPLASH


THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

DOESN'T THAT LOOK AS IF THE RAIN IS AVOIDING JUST THE HALL OF LIGHT?
TAKE A LOOK, SORA...!
"HAVE THE SUMMER RAINS COME AND GONE, SPARING THE HALL OF LIGHT?"
DID THE YEARLY SUMMER RAIN SPARE ONLY THE HALL OF LIGHT? WHILE THE OTHER SURROUNDING BUILDINGS RUST AND COLLAPSE, ONLY THE HALL OF LIGHT TAKE ON ITS ORIGINAL GLORIOUS FORM.

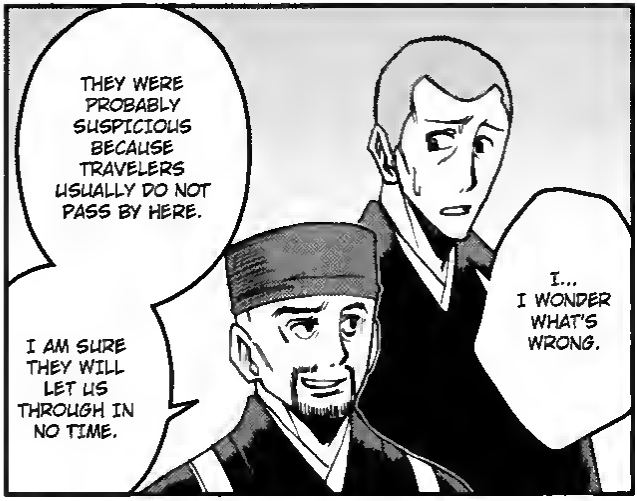

HEY!

THERE'S A BARRIER!
COULD THAT BE THE BARRIER OF SHITOMAE?

WE LEFT HIRAIZUMI AND TRAVELED SOUTHWEST...
YES!
SORA, DO YOU HAVE YOUR NOTE READY?
IT SEEMS LIKE IT.

AND FROM THERE WE HAVE COME TO THE BARRIER OF SHITOMAE.
HIRAIZUMI
KITAKAMI RIVER
THE BARRIER OF SHITOMAE
NARUGO
MOUNT IWADE
AS WE TRAVELED THROUGH SEVERAL POETIC SPOTS, WE ARRIVED TO THE HOT SPRINGS OF NARUGO...
...AND STAYED AT A VILLAGE BY THE FOOT OF MOUNT IWADE...
GLARE
WHO ARE YOU!?
WHAT BRINGS YOU TO A PLACE LIKE THAT!?
WELL, YOU SEE...
BEYOND THIS POINT, THERE'S ONLY MOUNTAIN TRAILS THAT PEOPLE RARELY PASS THROUGH!

I AM BASHO MATSUO AND THIS IS SORA KAWAI.
WE ARE BOTH TRAVELING POETS.
WE ARE ON A PILGRIMAGE AND WOULD LIKE TO GO TO THE LAND OF DEWA.
UM...IS SOMETHING WRONG?
WE...WE'RE GONNA GET YOUR IDENTITY CHECKED, SO WAIT HERE!!
HERE'S / OUR NOTE...
POETRY...
SORA KAWAI
BASHO MATSUO
ばっ
SNATCH!
HAND ME OVER YOUR NOTE AND LUGGAGE!


THEY WERE PROBABLY SUSPICIOUS BECAUSE TRAVELERS USUALLY DO NOT PASS BY HERE.
I AM SURE THEY WILL LET US THROUGH IN NO TIME.
I... I WONDER WHAT'S WRONG.

ZWISH
ZWISH
ZWISH

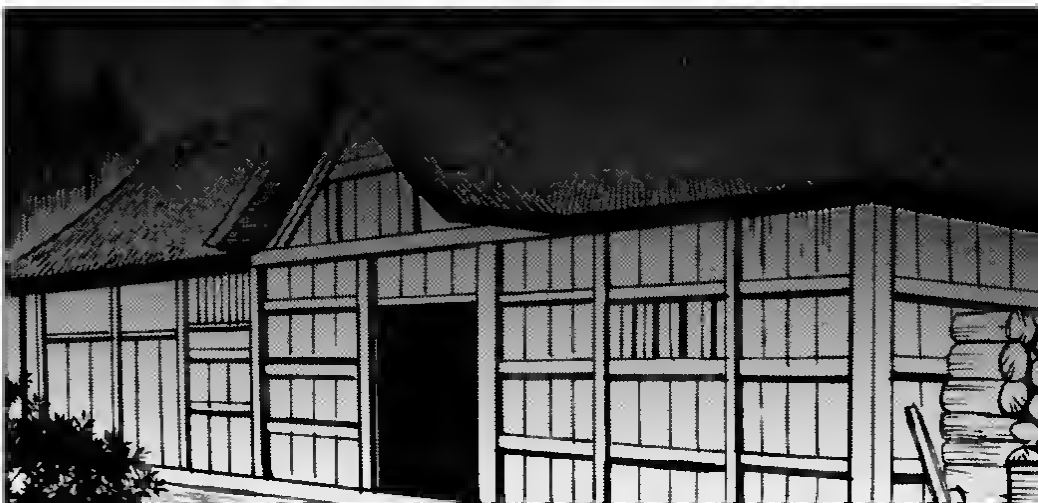
カア!
KAWW
カア
KAWW

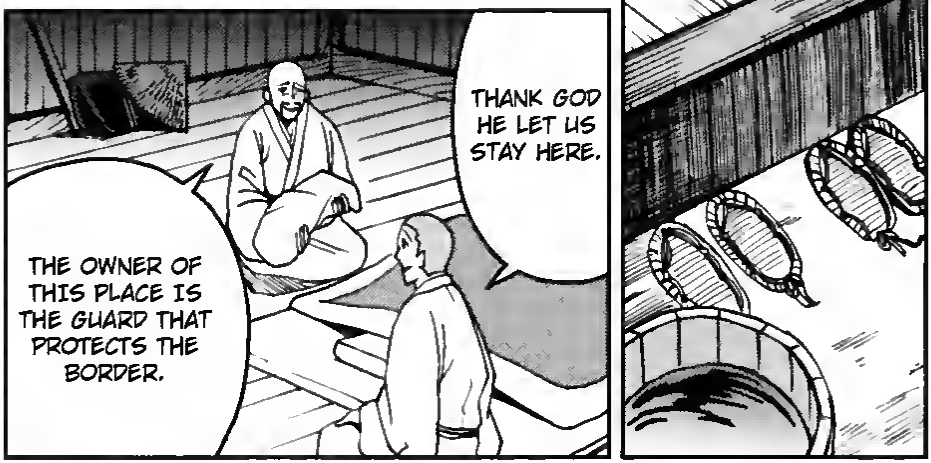
WE'VE CONFIRMED YOUR IDENTITY!
YOU MAY PASS!!

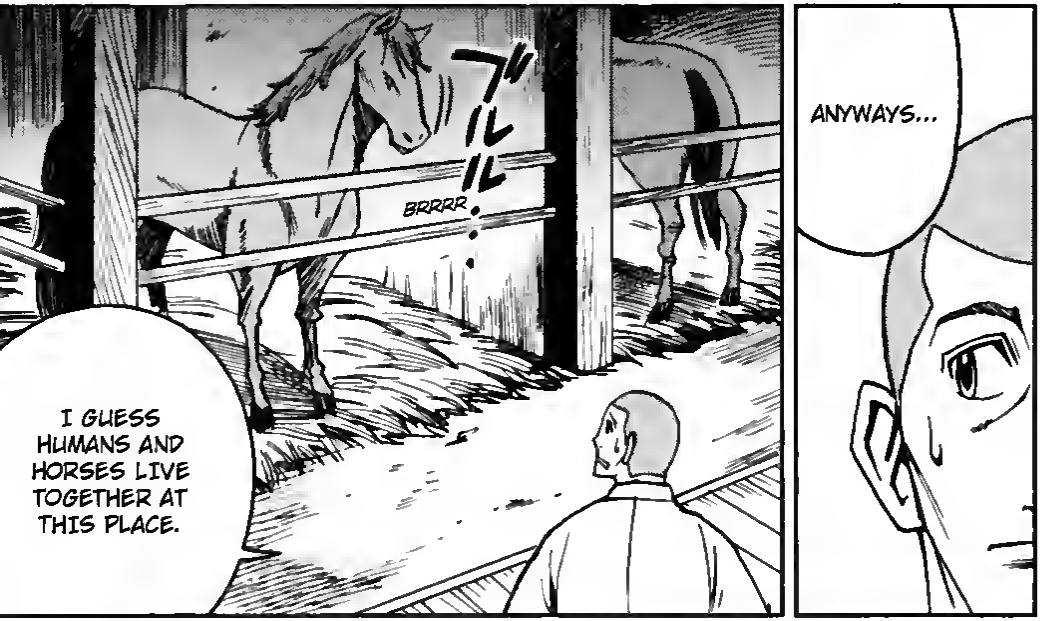
BASHO MATSUO!
SORA KAWAI!

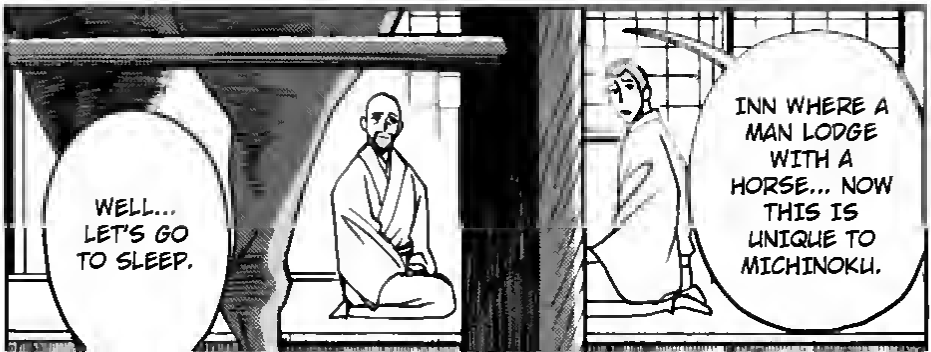
AH!
WE MOST LIKELY WOULD NOT FIND AN INN IN THE MOUNTAINS... I SUPPOSE WE HAVE TO CAMP OUT TONIGHT.
...BUT IT HAS GOTTEN DARK.
MASTER, THERE'S A HOUSE OVER THERE...!!

ZWISH
ZWISH
ZWISH
IT IS NICE THAT THEY HAVE FINALLY LET US THROUGH...

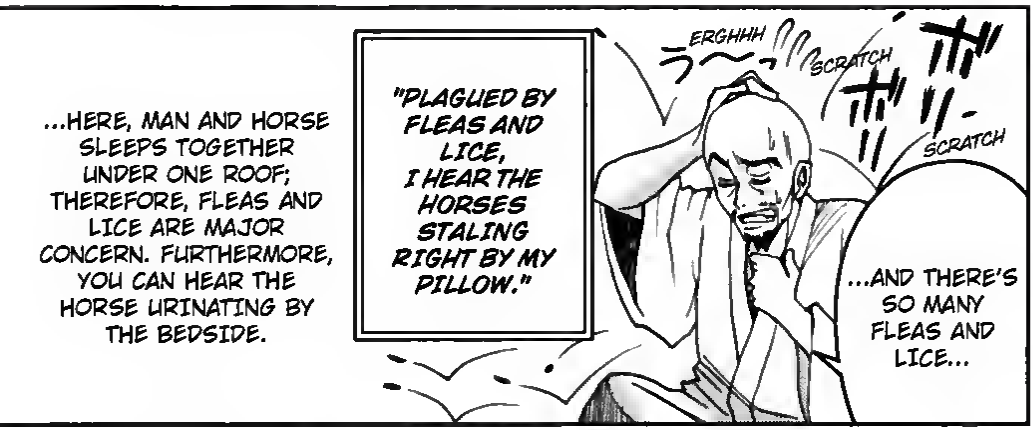



THANK GOD HE LET US STAY HERE.
THE OWNER OF THIS PLACE IS THE GUARD THAT PROTECTS THE BORDER.

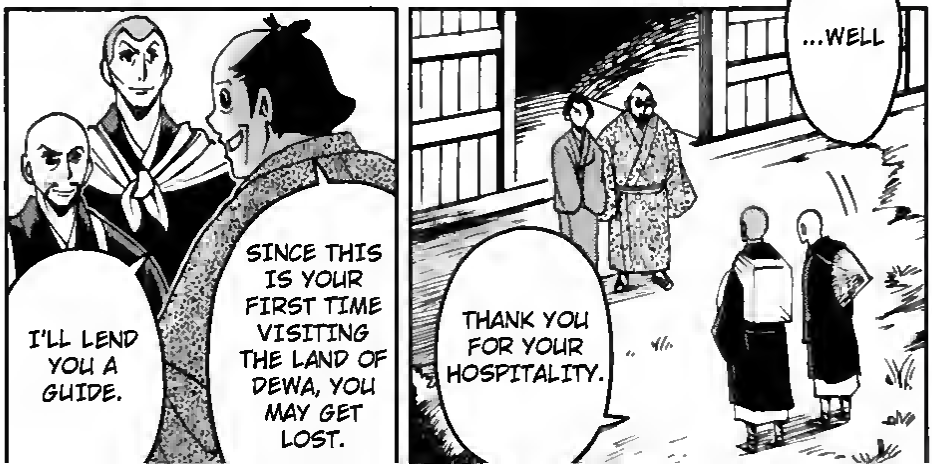

ブルル
BRRRR
I GUESS HUMANS AND HORSES LIVE TOGETHER AT THIS PLACE.
ANYWAYS...


WELL... LET'S GO TO SLEEP.
INN WHERE A MAN LODGE WITH A HORSE... NOW THIS IS UNIQUE TO MICHINOKU.

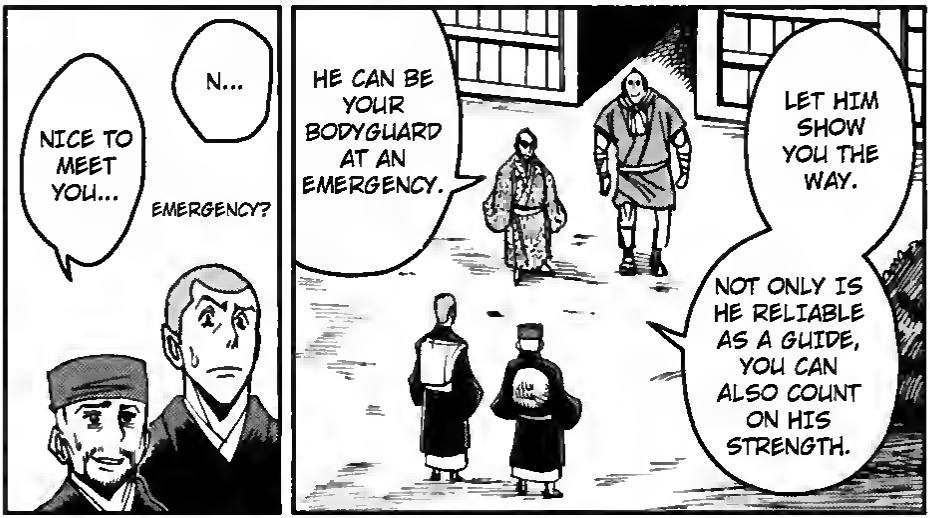
AHH!
PSSSSSS
PSSHHHHHHH
...HM?
A HORSE TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS BY MY BEDSIDE... HUH.
HAHA...
...

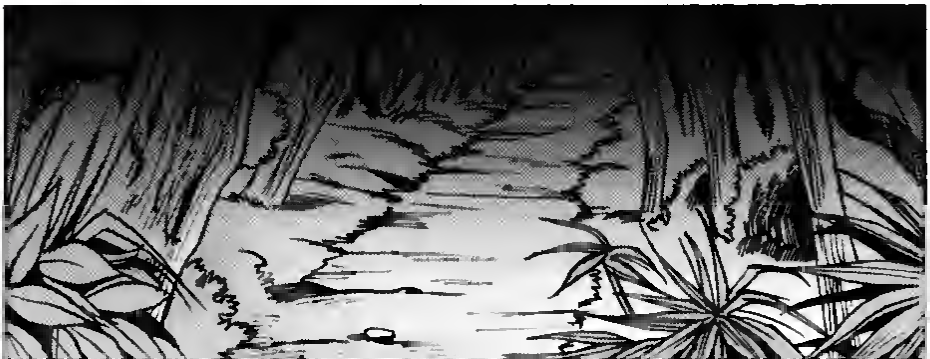

...HERE, MAN AND HORSE SLEEPS TOGETHER UNDER ONE ROOF; THEREFORE, FLEAS AND LICE ARE MAJOR CONCERN. FURTHERMORE, YOU CAN HEAR THE HORSE URINATING BY THE BEDSIDE.
"PLAGUED BY FLEAS AND LICE, I HEAR THE HORSES STALING RIGHT BY MY PILLOW."
ERGHHH
SCRATCH
SCRATCH
...AND THERE'S SO MANY FLEAS AND LICE...

WE STAYED AT THE GUARD'S HOUSE FOR THE NEXT THREE DAYS.
FWWOOOOSH
THE WEATHER WORSENED FROM THE NEXT DAY.


I'LL LEND YOU A GUIDE.
SINCE THIS IS YOUR FIRST TIME VISITING THE LAND OF DEWA, YOU MAY GET LOST.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY.
...WELL

FWOOSH
YES.
HEY!
FWIPH


N...
NICE TO MEET YOU...
EMERGENCY?
HE CAN BE YOUR BODYGUARD AT AN EMERGENCY.
LET HIM SHOW YOU THE WAY.
NOT ONLY IS HE RELIABLE AS A GUIDE, YOU CAN ALSO COUNT ON HIS STRENGTH.



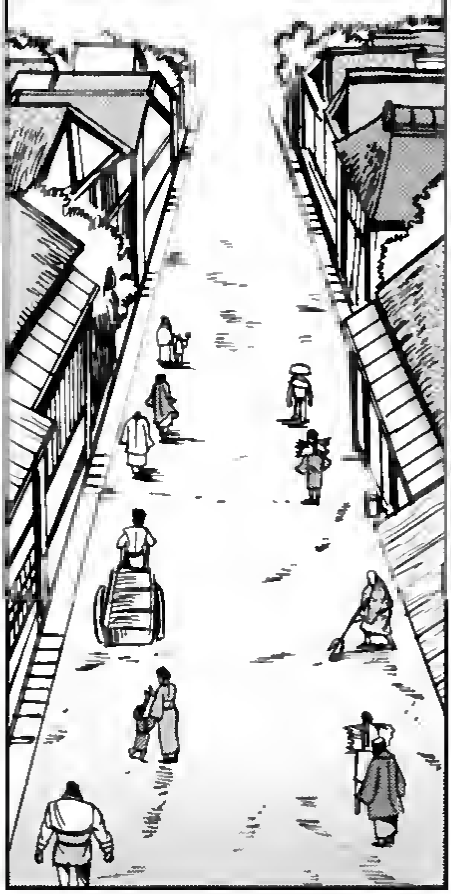
THE ROAD'S GOING TO GET STEEP, SO PLEASE BE CAREFUL.
ZWISH
ZWISH
THERE'S NOT A SINGLE CRY OF A BIRD.
SUCH A DENSE FOREST...

SSSSSHHHHH

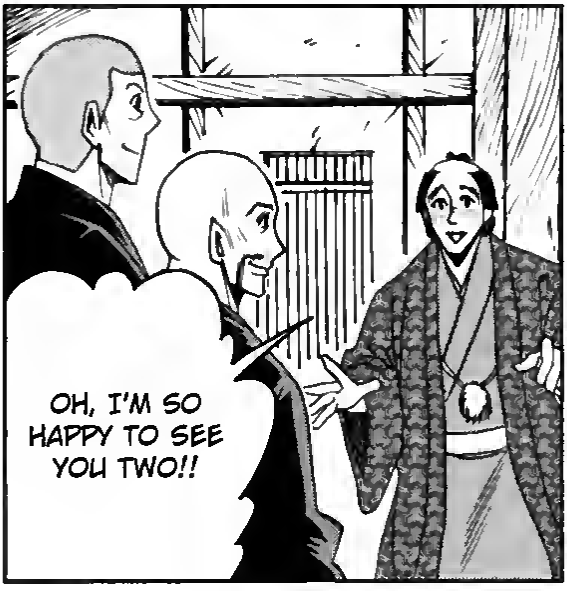
WE'VE CROSSED THE RIDGE!
WALK ALONG THE ROAD, AND YOU'LL GET TO OBANEZAWA.
YOU SHOULDN'T GET LOST ONCE YOU GET THIS FAR.

HUFF
PUFF
HEY, YOU TWO!

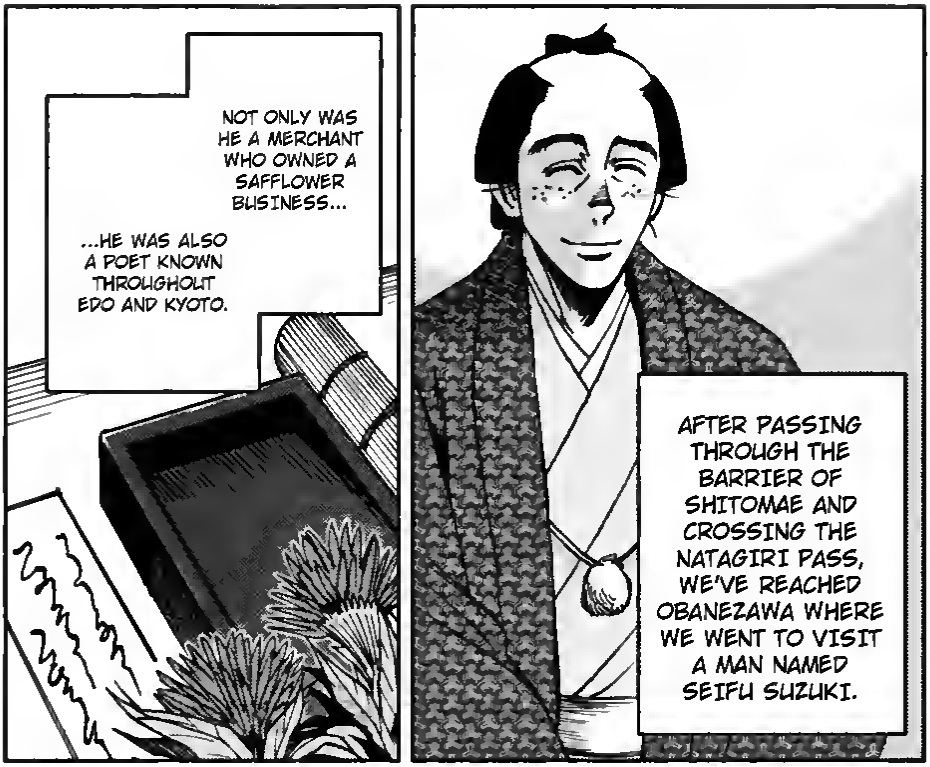
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
MY PLEASURE.
I'M GLAD NOTHING HAPPENED.
PEOPLE COME ACROSS ALL SORTS OF TROUBLE ON THIS ROAD.
LIKE ACCIDENTS...
...AND BANDITS...
BUT THANKFULLY, NOTHING HAPPENED TODAY.
I MUST GO NOW...
I PRAY FOR YOUR SAFE TRIP.
THANK YOU! TAKE CARE!
はは... HAHA
YOU TWO ARE VERY LUCKY!

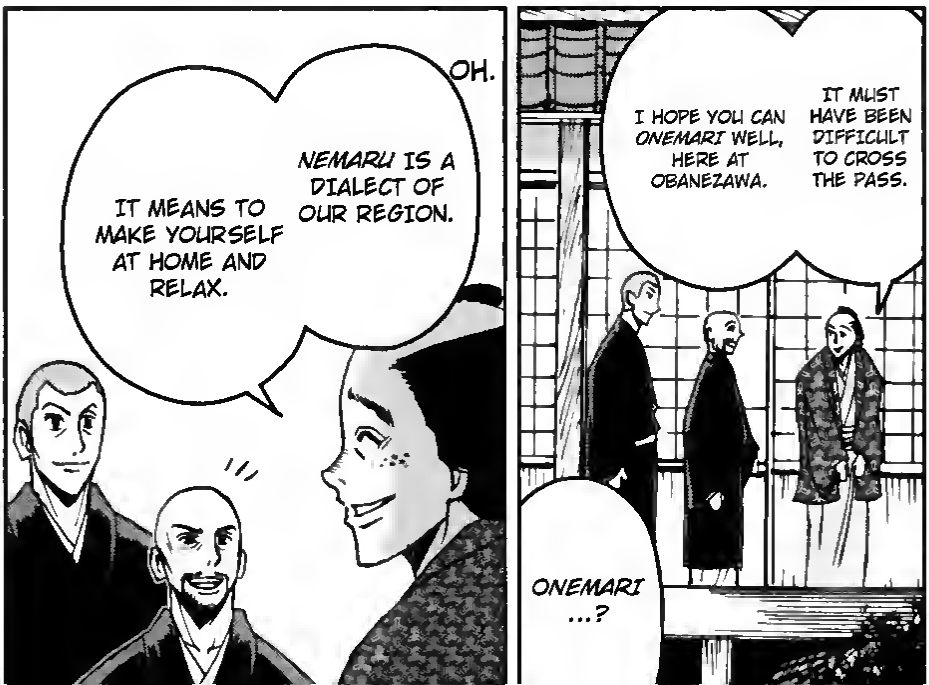


HELLO.

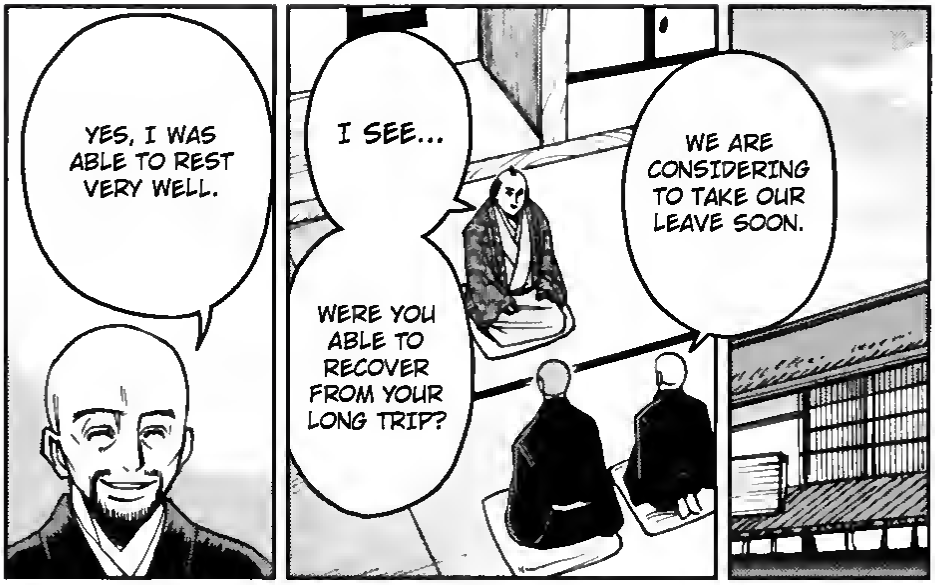

OH, I'M SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU TWO!!

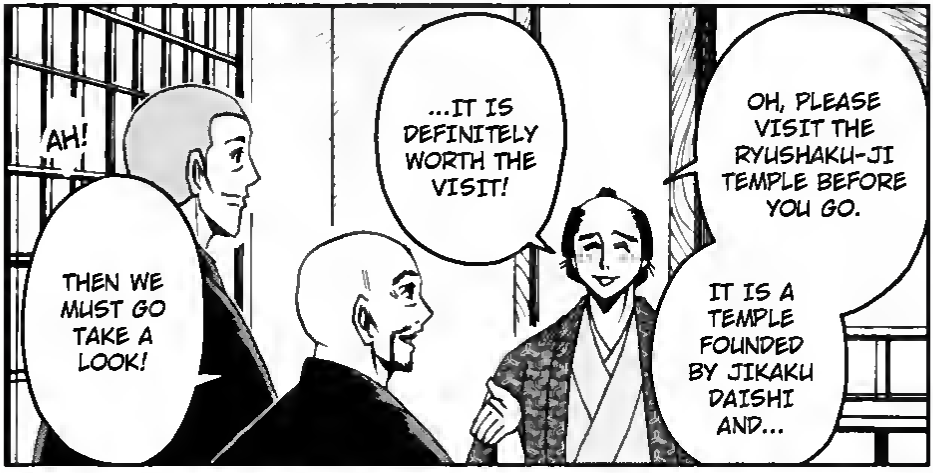
MASTER BASHO!
SORA!


NOT ONLY WAS HE A MERCHANT WHO OWNED A SAFFLOWER BUSINESS...
...HE WAS ALSO A POET KNOWN THROUGHOUT EDO AND KYOTO.
AFTER PASSING THROUGH THE BARRIER OF SHITOMAE AND CROSSING THE NATAGIRI PASS, WE'VE REACHED OBANEZAWA WHERE WE WENT TO VISIT A MAN NAMED SEIFU SUZUKI.


OH.
NEMARU IS A DIALECT OF OUR REGION.
IT MEANS TO MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME AND RELAX.
IT MUST HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT TO CROSS THE PASS.
I HOPE YOU CAN ONEMARI WELL, HERE AT OBANEZAWA.
ONEMARI ...?

I MUST RETURN WITH A GIFT OF A GOOD VERSE.
"MAKING COOLNESS MY LODGING: LYING AT EASE"
THANKS TO YOU, I AM ABLE TO ENJOY THE COOLNESS AND RELAX AS IF I AM AT HOME.
NEMARU... HUH.
INDEED ...
I CAN REALLY FEEL THE THOUGHTFULNESS OF MR. SEIFU.
IT WAS A SUDDEN VISIT, YET HE GREETED US SO KINDLY...
ALL THOUGH RICH, HE IS A GOOD MAN WHO IS NOT SELFISH, NOR GREEDY.
...WE STAYED UNDER SEIFU'S HOSPITALITY FOR 10 DAYS.
AS WE RECEIVED WARM WELCOMING FROM OTHER POETS OF OBANEZAWA AND ENJOYED GATHERINGS...




AH!
THEN WE MUST GO TAKE A LOOK!
...IT IS DEFINITELY WORTH THE VISIT!
OH, PLEASE VISIT THE RYUSHAKU-JI TEMPLE BEFORE YOU GO.
IT IS A TEMPLE FOUNDED BY JIKAKU DAISHI AND...

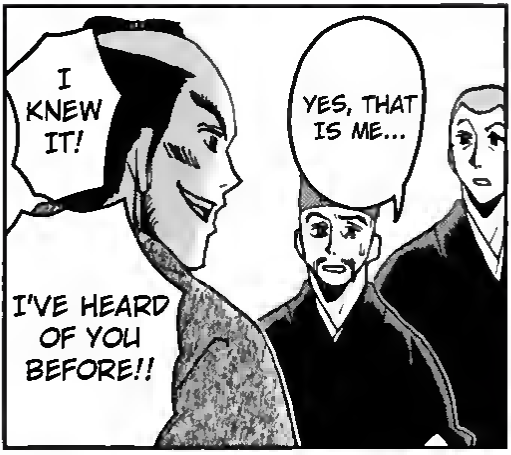
WE RODE A HORSE FROM OBANEZAWA FOR ABOUT *7-RI...
MI--N
MI--N
LEAVING SEIFU'S HOUSE, WE DECIDED TO HEAD TO RYUSHAKU-JI TEMPLE AS SUGGESTED.

* AROUND 30KM. (18.64 MILES)

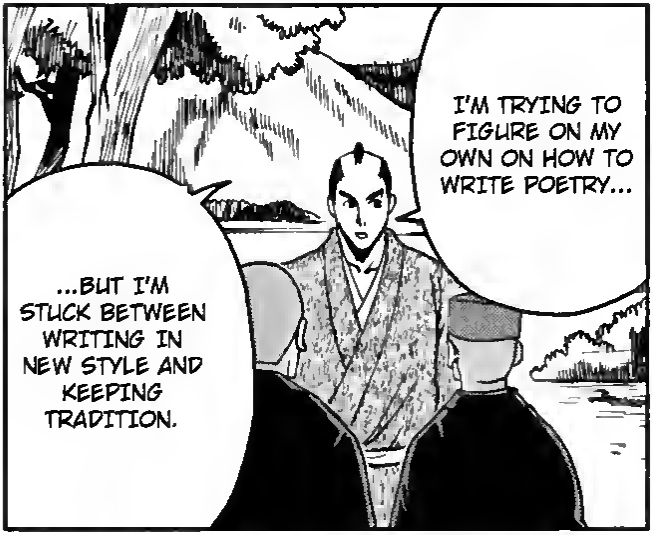
THAT IS AN AMAZING TEMPLE ON A HILLSIDE!
LET'S TRY GETTING TO THE MAIN BUILDING THAT IS ON TOP BEFORE IT GETS TOO DARK.
WOW...!
MI--N
IT'S SO QUIET.
MI--N
I CAN ONLY HEAR THE SOUND OF THE CICADAS.

YOU'VE THOUGHT OF A VERSE, MASTER!?
YES.
AT THE RYUSHAKU-JI, ALL THE MOUNTAINS WERE SILENT. IN THIS SILENCE, THE SHRILL OF THE CICADAS SEEM TO PIERCE INTO THE ROCKS.
"HOW STILL IT IS! INTO THE ROCK IT PIERCES -- THE CICADA SHRILL."

I WAS ABLE TO REST MY BODY AT OBANE-ZAWA...
...AND AT THIS RYUSHAKU-JI TEMPLE, I WAS ABLE TO REST MY SOUL...
LET'S CONTINUE OUR JOURNEY, SORA.
YES.
NEXT, WE THOUGHT OF CROSSING THE MOGAMI RIVER, SO WE STOPPED BY A PLACE CALLED OISHIDA TO CHECK THE WEATHER.
MASTER, DO YOU THINK THERE WOULD BE A BOAT TODAY?
I'M NOT TOO SURE...

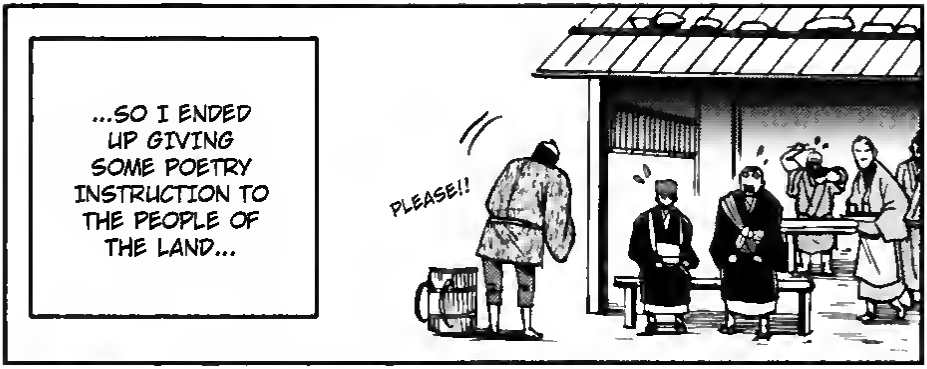

I KNEW IT!
YES, THAT IS ME...
I'VE HEARD OF YOU BEFORE!!

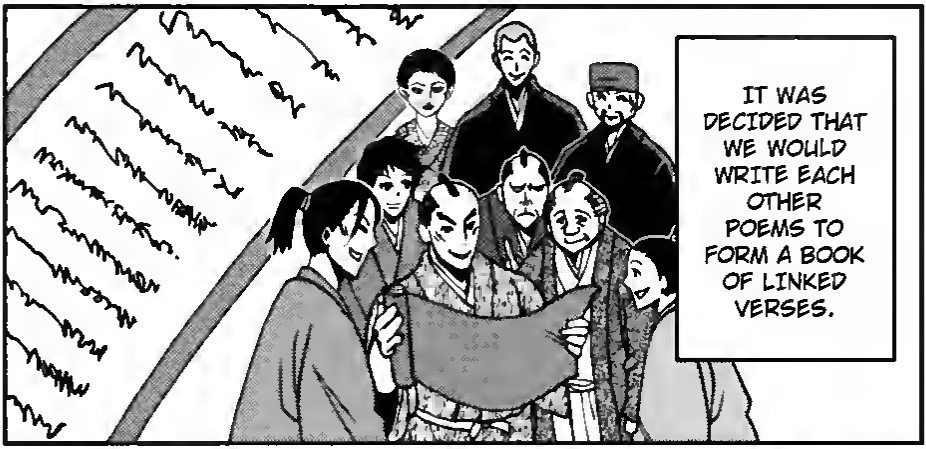
UM...
ARE YOU PERHAPS MASTER BASHO MATSUO!?
JOLT


I'M TRYING TO FIGURE ON MY OWN ON HOW TO WRITE POETRY...
...BUT I'M STUCK BETWEEN WRITING IN NEW STYLE AND KEEPING TRADITION.

THIS REGION HAS THE TRADITION OF MAKING HAIKAI POEMS SINCE THE OLD DAYS...

MASTER MATSUO! IF YOU DON'T MIND...
...CAN YOU GIVE ME A HELPING HAND!?


...SO I ENDED UP GIVING SOME POETRY INSTRUCTION TO THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND...
PLEASE!!


IT WAS DECIDED THAT WE WOULD WRITE EACH OTHER POEMS TO FORM A BOOK OF LINKED VERSES.

MEANWHILE, THE WEATHER HAS BECOME PERFECT FOR SAILING.
THE BOAT IS LEAVING!

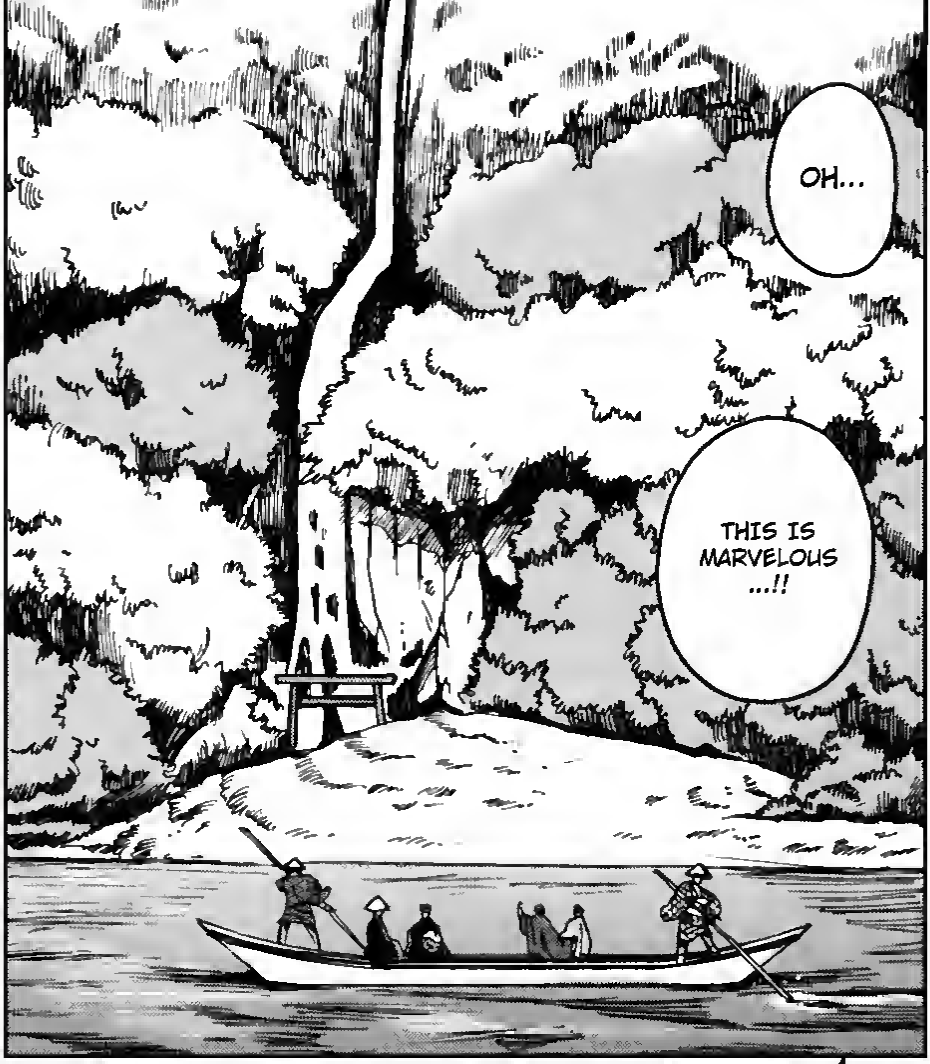
MY GOODNESS...
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!

SIGH
MY TRAVEL TO INSPIRE ME HAS BECOME A TRAVEL TO INSTRUCT OTHERS...
YOU MUST BE TIRED.

GENTLE-MEN!
WE'RE ALMOST AT THE SHIRAITO FALLS!

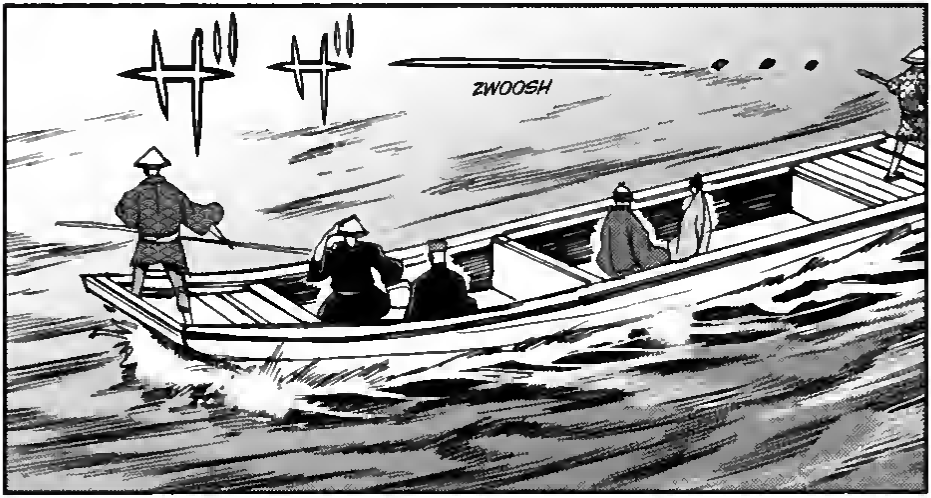
THE GREEN ON THE MOUNTAINS SEEM AS IF THEY ARE COVERING ME UP...

IT FEELS LIKE WE'RE TRAVELING THROUGH THE BUSHES!


OH...
THIS IS MARVELOUS ...!!

AHHH!!
ZWWOOOSH

HOLD ON TIGHT!
THE WATER FLOW'S GONNA SPEED UP FROM HERE.
THERE SEEMS TO BE QUITE BIT OF WATER HERE...
YES...
I'M FINE.
M...MASTER!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT!?


ZWOOSH

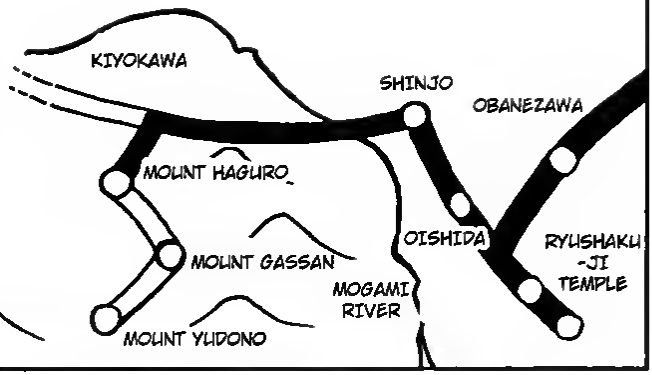
M..MASTER! PLEASE HOLD ON TIGHT!!
IT REALLY IS FAST...

DEAR ME...
SIGH
INDEED ...
THERE'S QUITE BIT OF A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEEING IT AND ACTUALLY EXPERIENCING IT...
I FEEL NAUSEOUS...

NOW IF I WERE TO MAKE A VERSE OUT OF THIS...
"GATHERING THE MAY RAINS...
...AND COOL, THE MOGAMI RIVER"
...NO
ZWWOOOOOOSHH

"GATHERING THE MAY RAINS AND SWIFT, THE MOGAMI RIVER"
THE MOGAMI RIVER, WHICH ALREADY IS KNOWN TO HAVE A FAST CURRENT, COLLECTED THE MAY RAINS AND IS FLOWING DOWN WITH MIGHTY SPEED.
...YES
IT IS PERFECT!
INDEED!
IT ACCURATELY DEPICTS THE NATURE OF THE MOGAMI RIVER!

NEXT WE HEADED TO THE THREE MOUNTAINS OF DEWA, WHICH ARE FAMOUS FOR ASCETIC PRACTICES.



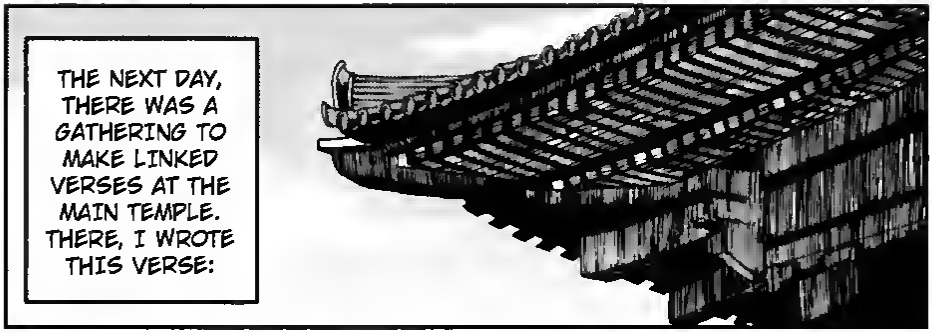
MOUNT HAGURO, MOUNT GASSAN AND MOUNT YUDONO. ALL THREE ARE COLLECTIVELY CALLED THE THREE MOUNTAINS OF DEWA.

JUNE 3RD

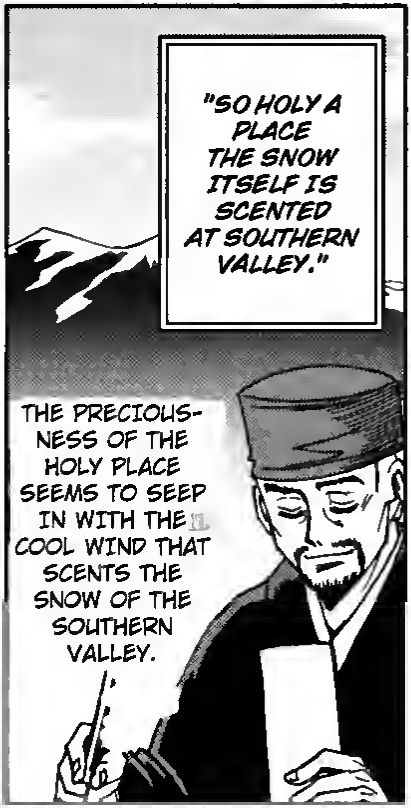
WE WENT TO THE VILLAGE BY THE FOOT OF MOUNT HAGURO TO SEE A DYER NAMED ZUSHIKICHI...

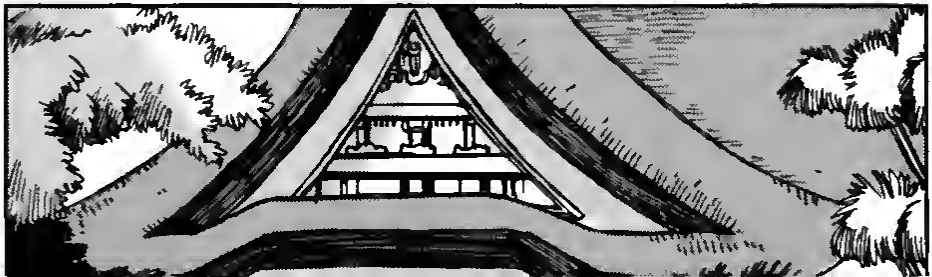
HE INTRODUCED US TO EGAKU, THE MONK OF *HAGURO GONGEN, WHO ALLOWED US TO STAY AT THE TEMPLE'S GUESTHOUSE IN THE SOUTHERN VALLEY.

* HAGURO GONGEN: DEWA SHRINE


THE NEXT DAY, THERE WAS A GATHERING TO MAKE LINKED VERSES AT THE MAIN TEMPLE. THERE, I WROTE THIS VERSE:

JUNE 5TH
WE WENT TO PAY RESPECTS TO THE HAGURO GONGEN.


"SO HOLY A PLACE THE SNOW ITSELF IS SCENTED AT SOUTHERN VALLEY."
THE PRECIOUS-NESS OF THE HOLY PLACE SEEMS TO SEEP IN WITH THE COOL WIND THAT SCENTS THE SNOW OF THE SOUTHERN VALLEY.

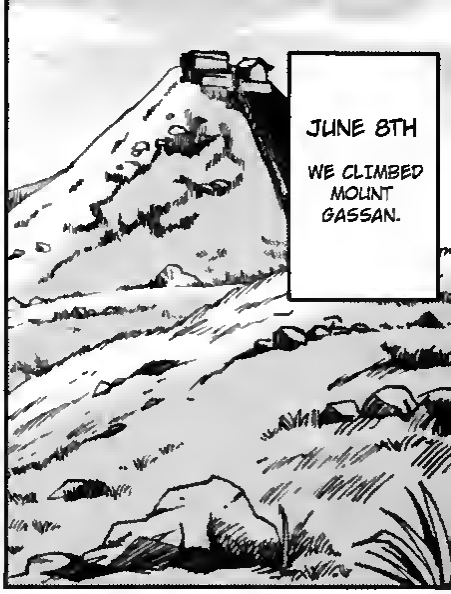


INDEED ...
AH...
IT REALLY DOES HAVE A MIRACULOUS FEEL TO IT!

THIS MUST BE THE REFLECTION OF THE MOUNTAIN'S IMMORTALITY...

THIS PLACE HAS BEEN BOTH WORSHIPPED AND FEARED AS THE SPIRITUAL LAND FOR MANY YEARS...
...YET ITS POWER CONTINUES TO SHINE...

HUFF
PUFFF

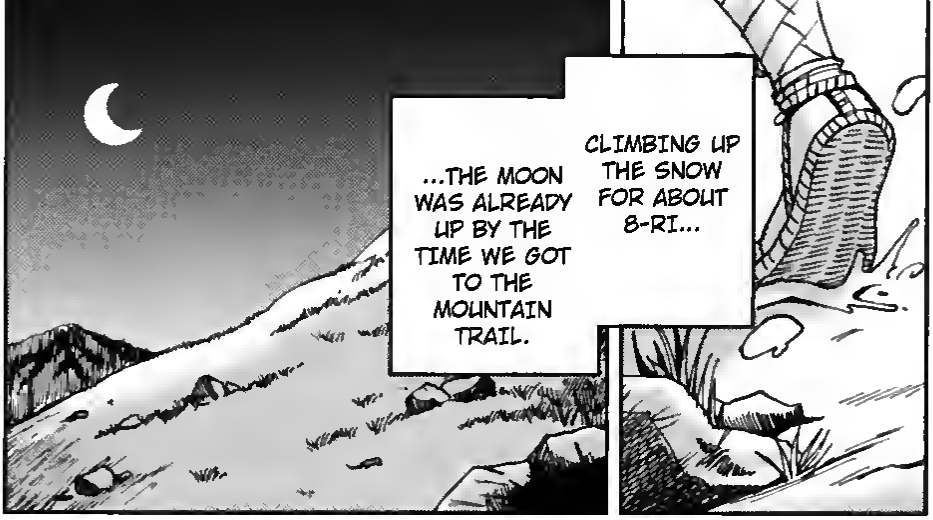

JUNE 8TH
WE CLIMBED MOUNT GASSAN.

WE'RE SURROUNDED IN WHITE...
S..SO MUCH FOG AND CLOUDS!
...LIKE THIS IS A BARRIER OF CLOUDS...

HNNG.

Y...YES SIR!!

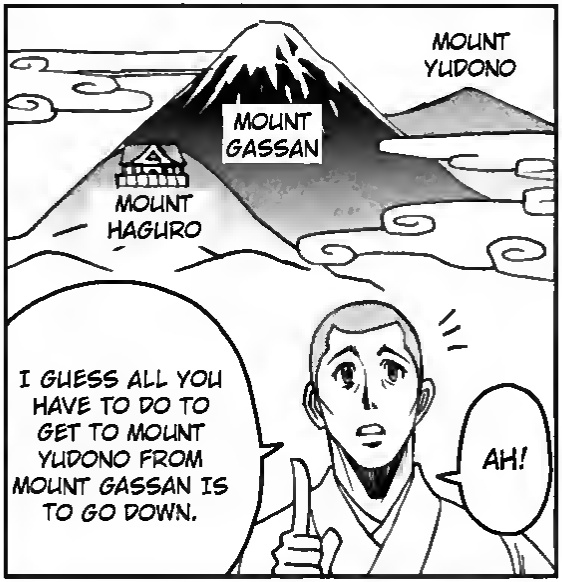
QUIT DILLY-DALLYING OR YOU'LL GET SEPARATED!!



* "THE PEAKS OF CLOUDS...": LIKE THE NAME ITSELF MEANS 'MOON MOUNTAIN', MOUNT GASSAN HAS A SLIGHT CRESCENT OVER IT. HOW MANY PEAKS OF CLOUDS HAVE CRUMBLED AND FORMED AGAIN BEFORE DUSK?

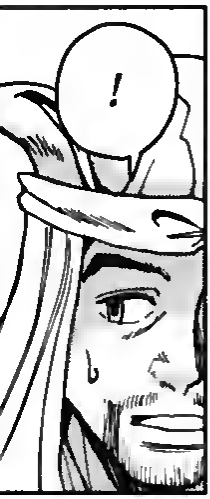
ONCE THE CLOUD CLEARS TOMORROW, WE'RE GOING DOWN TO MOUNT YUDONO!

THAT'S RIGHT! BE CAREFUL NOT TO SLIP TO YOUR DEATH!!
ガッはっは
BWAAHAHA


MOUNT YUDONO
MOUNT GASSAN
MOUNT HAGURO
I GUESS ALL YOU HAVE TO DO TO GET TO MOUNT YUDONO FROM MOUNT GASSAN IS TO GO DOWN.
AH!

NOW GET SOME REST FOR TOMORROW!
Y...YES, SIR!

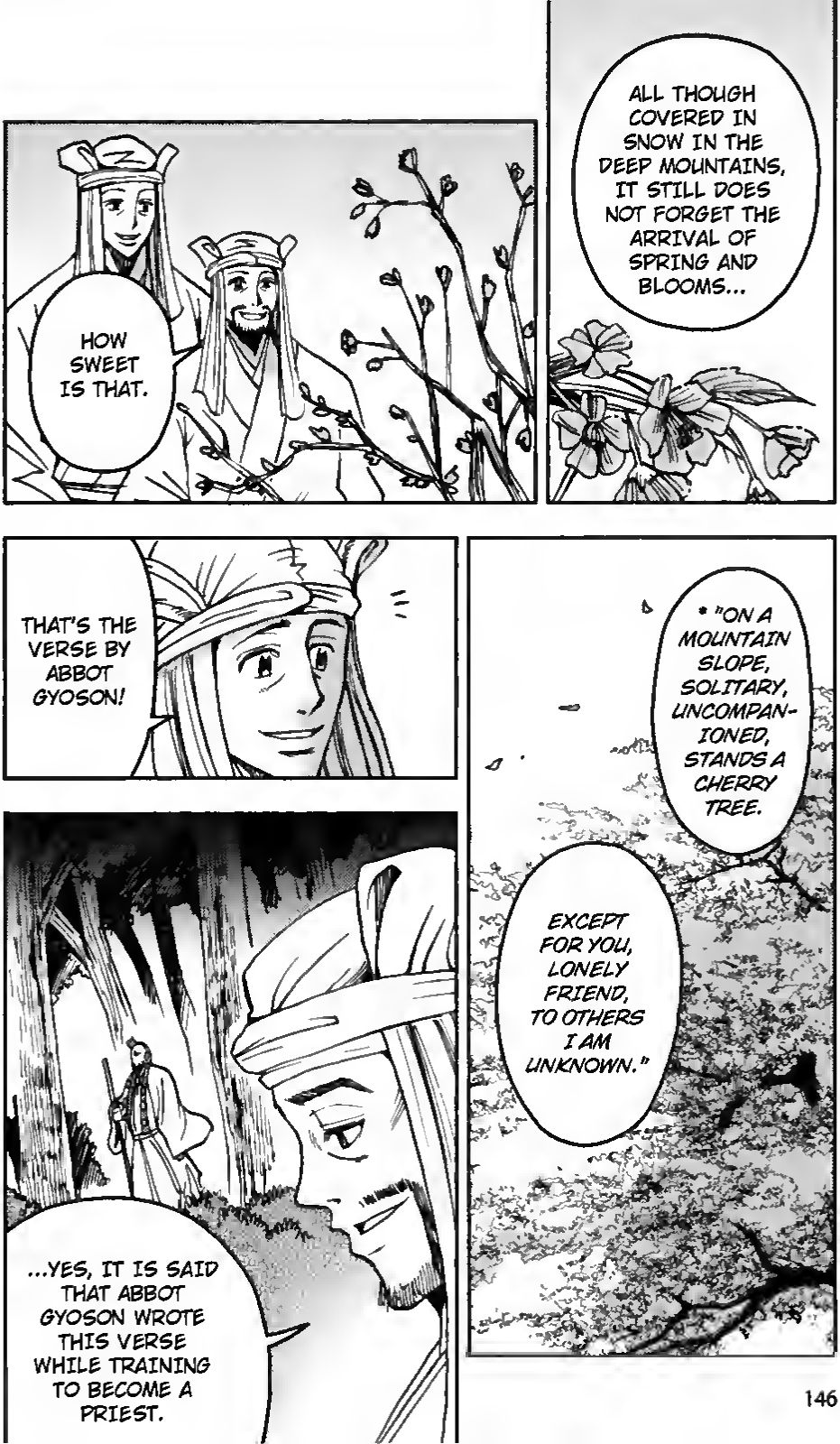
THE NEXT DAY, THE CLOUDS CLEARED SO WE WENT DOWN TO MOUNT YUDONO.


!

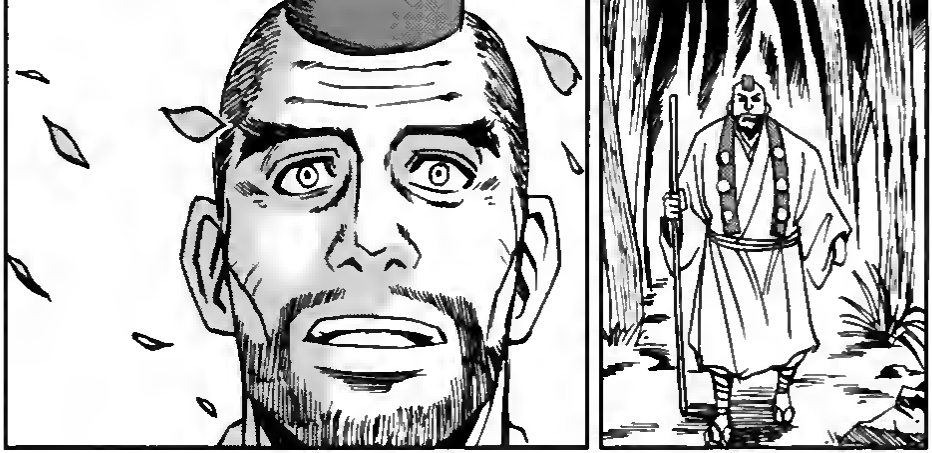
ALL RIGHT.
MASTER!? PLEASE BE CAREFUL!!

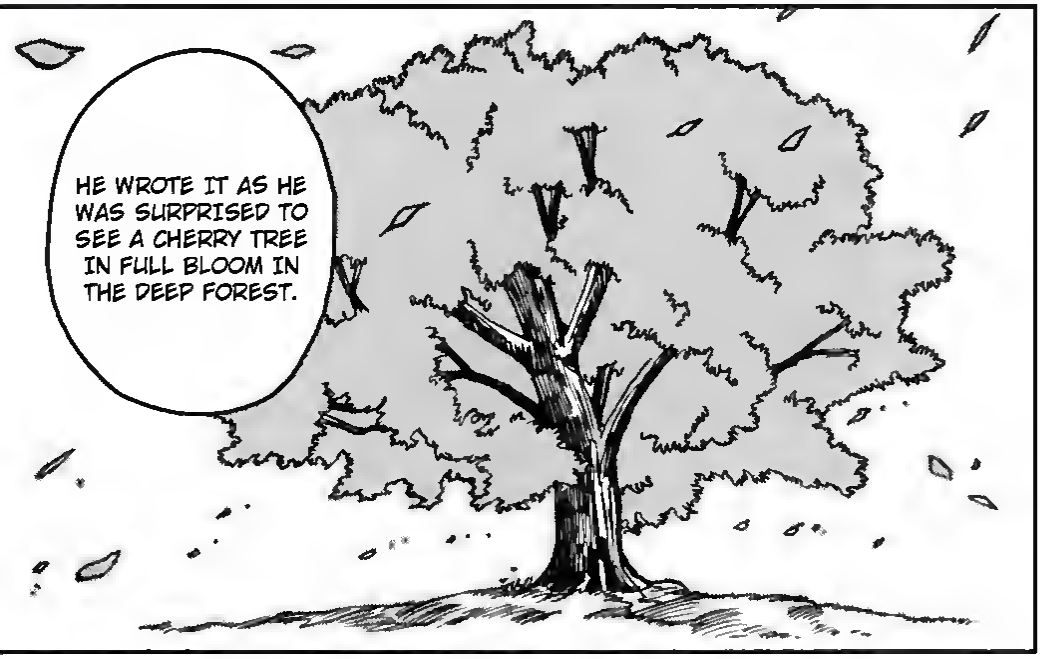
SLIP
WHOOPS!

SORA! I FOUND A WILD CHERRY TREE!

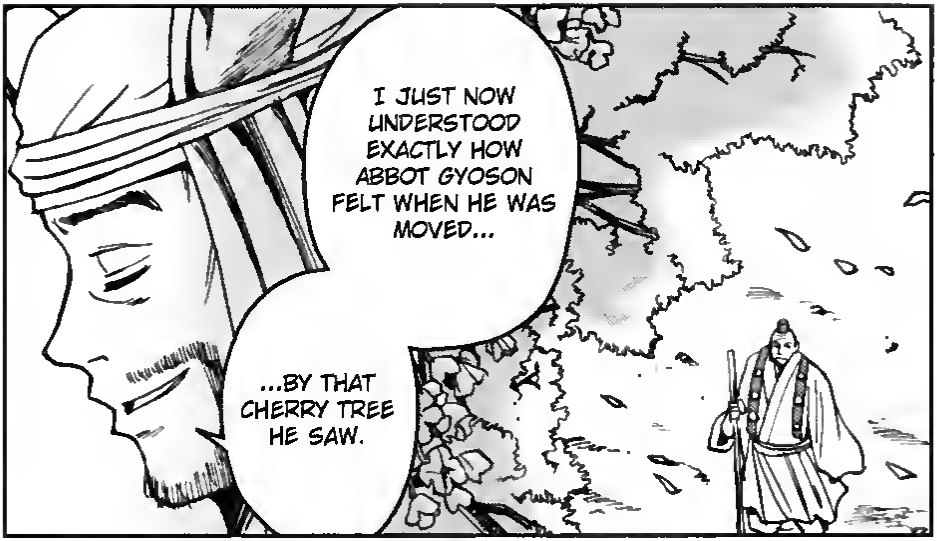

ALL THOUGH COVERED IN SNOW IN THE DEEP MOUNTAINS, IT STILL DOES NOT FORGET THE ARRIVAL OF SPRING AND BLOOMS...
HOW SWEET IS THAT.
* "ON A MOUNTAIN SLOPE, SOLITARY, UNCOMPANIONED, STANDS A CHERRY TREE.
EXCEPT FOR YOU, LONELY FRIEND, TO OTHERS I AM UNKNOWN."
THAT'S THE VERSE BY ABBOT GYOSON!
...YES, IT IS SAID THAT ABBOT GYOSON WROTE THIS VERSE WHILE TRAINING TO BECOME A PRIEST.

* ON A MOUNTAIN SLOPE...: OH CHERRY TREE, IN THIS DEEP FOREST, WE ONLY HAVE EACH OTHER.

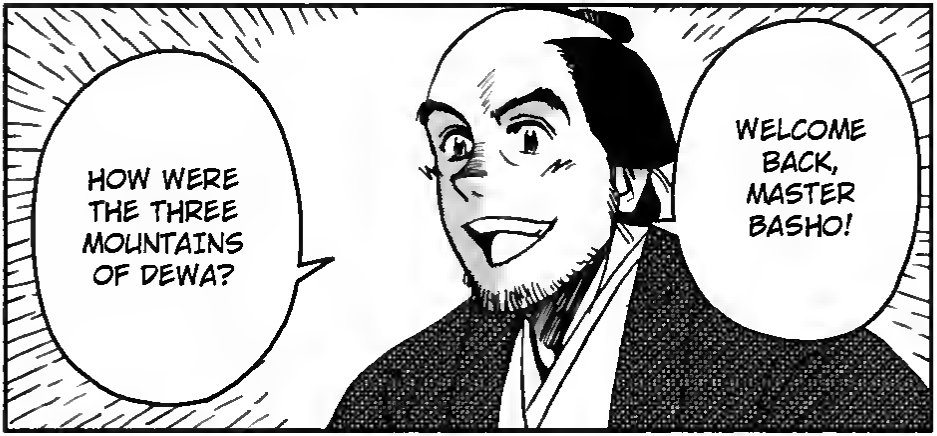



HE WROTE IT AS HE WAS SURPRISED TO SEE A CHERRY TREE IN FULL BLOOM IN THE DEEP FOREST.

...YET STRONGLY THE CHERRY BLOOMS...
WITHOUT ANYONE NOTICING...

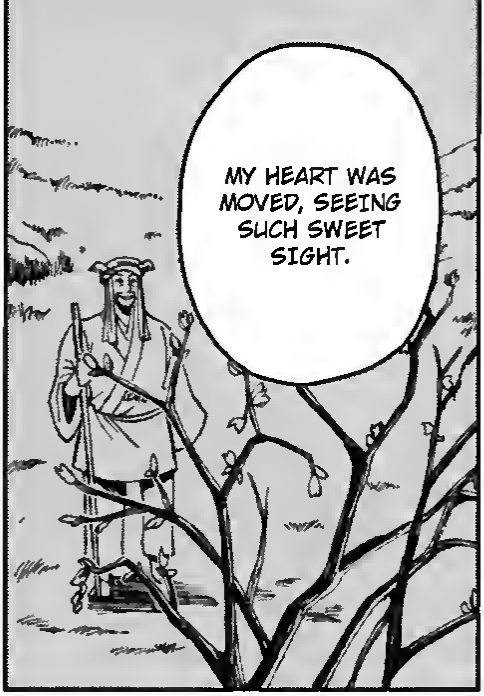

I JUST NOW UNDERSTOOD EXACTLY HOW ABBOT GYOSON FELT WHEN HE WAS MOVED...
...BY THAT CHERRY TREE HE SAW.

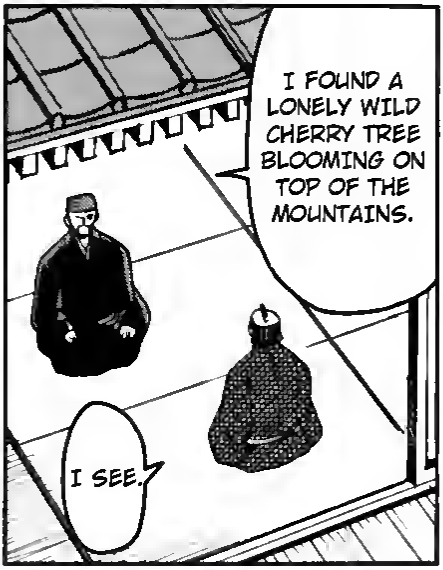
NATURE'S STRONG VITALITY CONTINUES TO MOVE PEOPLE'S HEARTS...


WELCOME BACK, MASTER BASHO!
HOW WERE THE THREE MOUNTAINS OF DEWA?

MOREOVER ...
I FEEL LIKE I'VE FOUND WHAT I WAS SEARCHING FOR.
HUH?

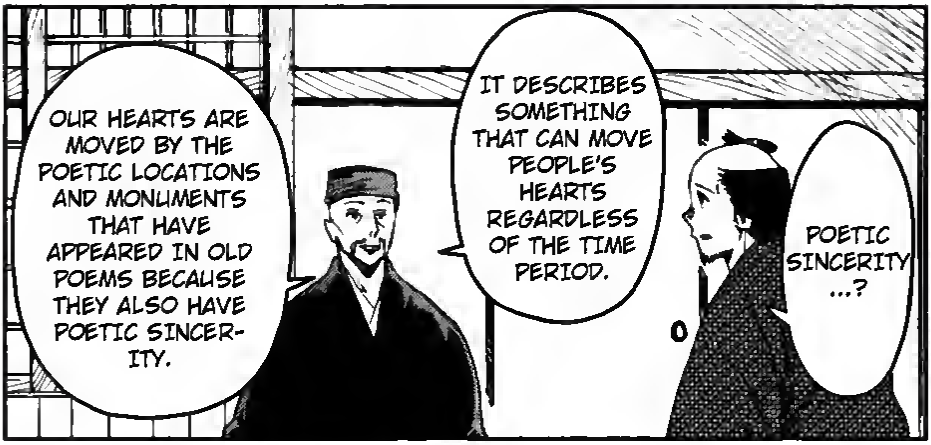
OH, SAKICHI.
AS THE RUMOR HAS IT, THEY WERE INDEED WONDERFUL MOUNTAINS. MY SOUL WAS PURIFIED.
I'M GLAD TO HEAR THAT.

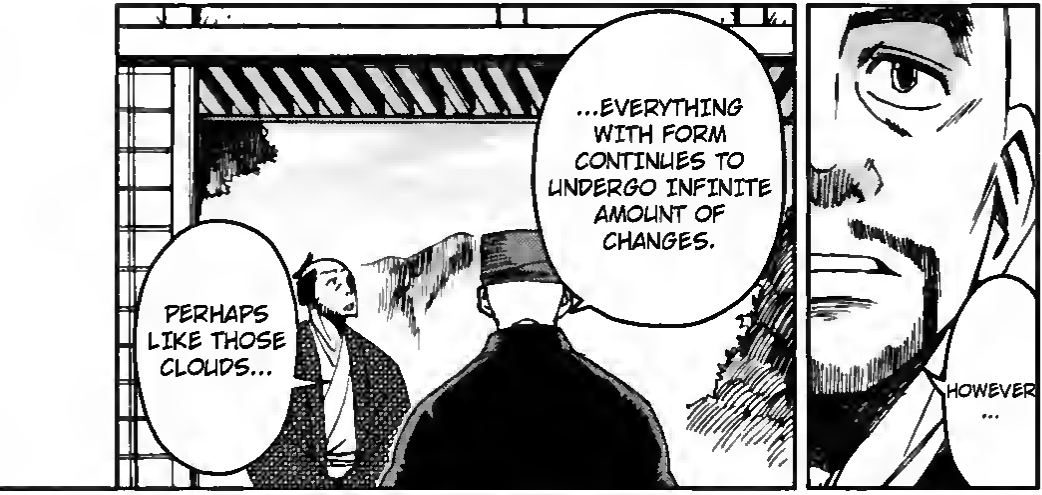

MY HEART WAS MOVED, SEEING SUCH SWEET SIGHT.


I FOUND A LONELY WILD CHERRY TREE BLOOMING ON TOP OF THE MOUNTAINS.
I SEE.

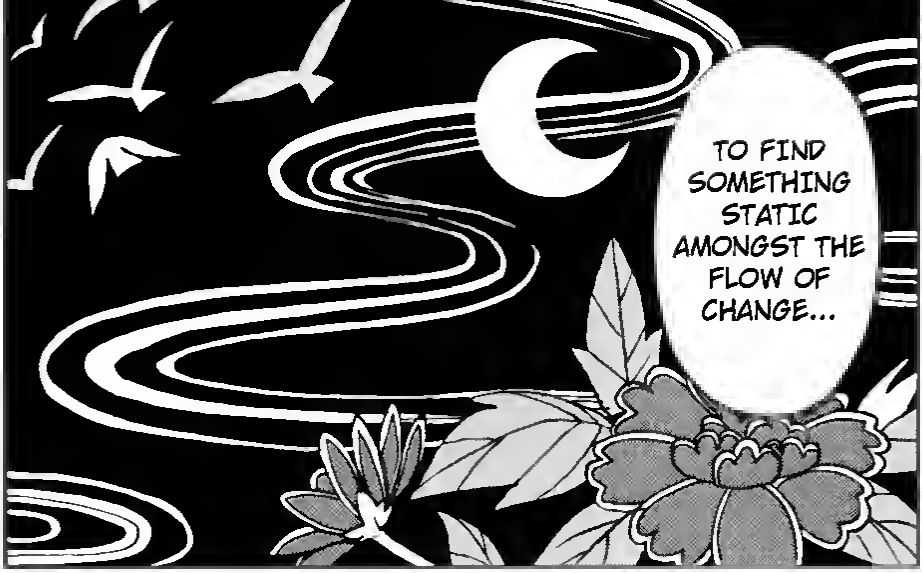
...*"POETIC SINCERITY"* ...
...MAYBE THAT'S THE WAY TO CALL IT.

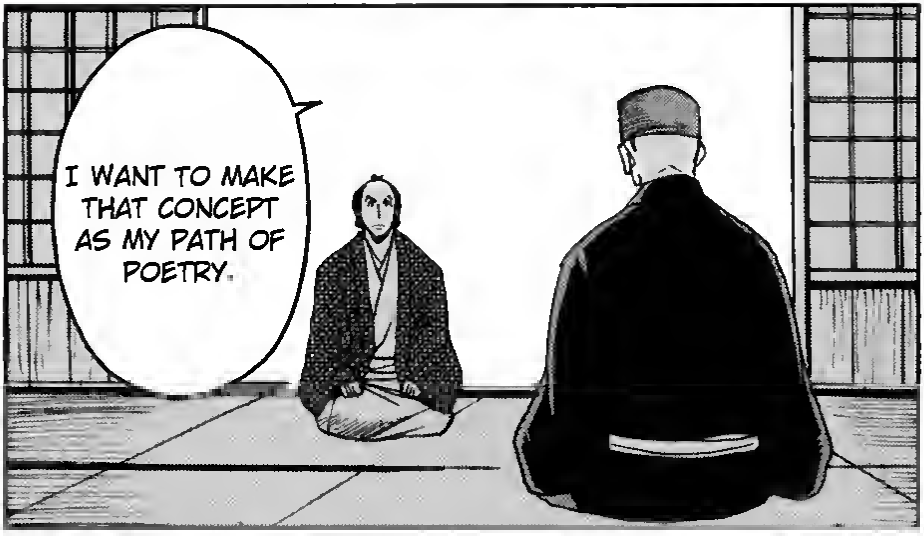
I HAVE WITNESSED MANY THINGS SINCE I'VE COME TO MICHINOKU, BUT...
...THIS CHERRY TREE SEEMS TO RELATE WITH ALL THOSE OTHER THINGS.


OUR HEARTS ARE MOVED BY THE POETIC LOCATIONS AND MONUMENTS THAT HAVE APPEARED IN OLD POEMS BECAUSE THEY ALSO HAVE POETIC SINCERITY.
IT DESCRIBES SOMETHING THAT CAN MOVE PEOPLE'S HEARTS REGARDLESS OF THE TIME PERIOD.
POETIC SINCERITY ...?

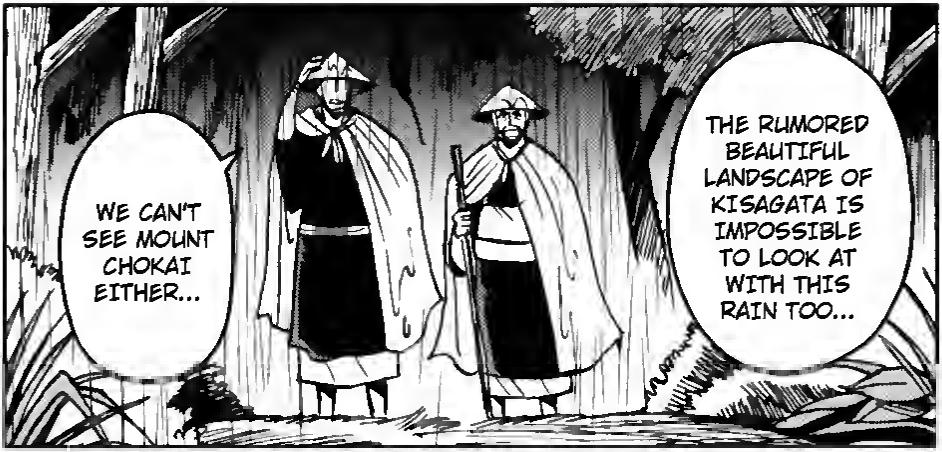

PERHAPS LIKE THOSE CLOUDS...
...EVERYTHING WITH FORM CONTINUES TO UNDERGO INFINITE AMOUNT OF CHANGES.
HOWEVER ...

... TO FIND THE POETIC SINCERITY THAT LIES WITHIN THOSE CHANGES.
I BELIEVE THAT US POETS, WHO CAPTURES THE FORM OF THINGS, MUST JUDGE WHEN THE CHANGE OCCURS...

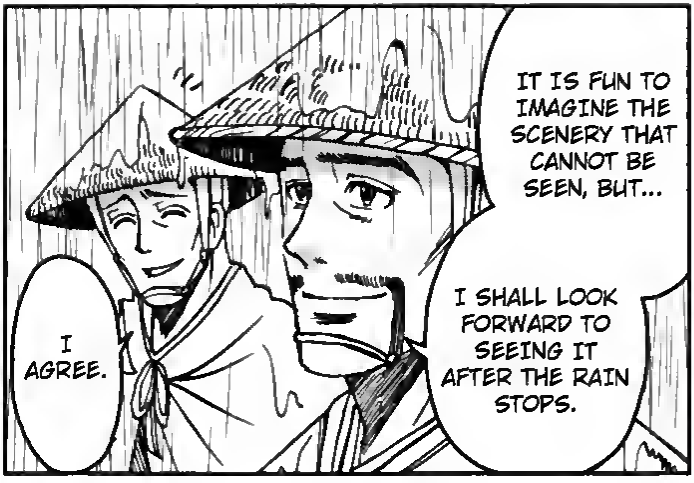

TO FIND SOMETHING STATIC AMONGST THE FLOW OF CHANGE...


I WANT TO MAKE THAT CONCEPT AS MY PATH OF POETRY.

SSSSHHHHHHHHH
WE ARRIVED TO A VILLAGE IN SAKATA AFTER LEAVING MOUNT HAGURO ON A DAY WHEN THE RAIN WAS POURING DOWN.


WE CAN'T SEE MOUNT CHOKAI EITHER...
THE RUMORED BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPE OF KISAGATA IS IMPOSSIBLE TO LOOK AT WITH THIS RAIN TOO...

SSSSHHHHHH


IT IS FUN TO IMAGINE THE SCENERY THAT CANNOT BE SEEN, BUT...
I AGREE.
I SHALL LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING IT AFTER THE RAIN STOPS.

THE NEXT DAY, WE FLOATED OUR BOATS AT KISAGATA UNDER THE CLEAR SKY.
THE SCENERY IS VERY SIMILAR TO MATSUSHIMA.
INDEED ...
BUT SOME-THING'S DIFFERENT...

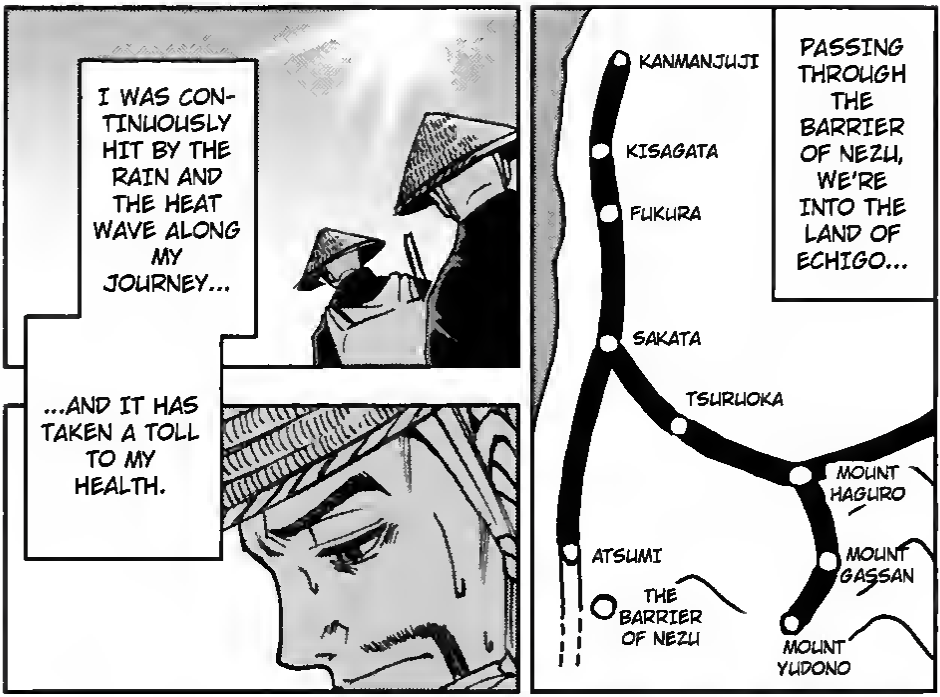
KISAGATA'S SCENERY HAS A MORE ENDURING, SINKING KIND OF BEAUTY...
MATSUSHIMA HAD A BRIGHTER, CLEARER KIND OF BEAUTY, BUT...

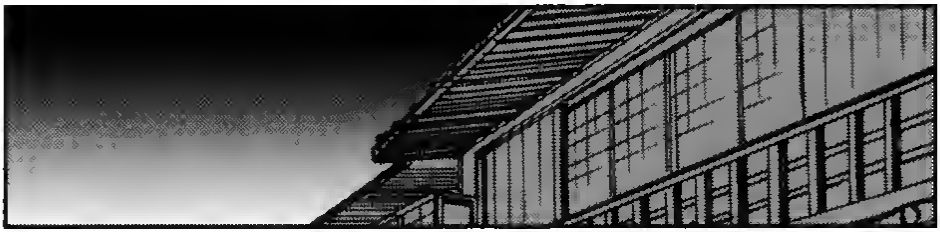
"KISAGATA-- XI SHI ASLEEP IN THE RAIN FLOWERS OF THE SILK TREE"
FLOWERS OF THE SILK TREE BLOSSOMS UNDER KISAGATA'S RAIN. IT MADE ME THINK OF HOW XI SHI SHUT HER EYES IN DISTRESS OVER THE SIGHT OF THOSE FLOWERS.
A BEAUTY RELATABLE TO A LADY WHO IS DISTRESSED WITH SADNESS AND LONELINESS...
...YES LIKE THE ANCIENT CHINESE BEAUTY, XI SHI...

MASTER BASHO, WHERE ARE YOU HEADED TO NEXT?
WE'RE THINKING ABOUT TAKING THE *HOKUROKU ROAD TO AROUND KANAZAWA.
THAT MUST GOING TO BE A DIFFICULT TRIP.
THERE'S ABOUT *130-RI FROM THIS SAKATA TO KANAZAWA.
130-RI ...
PLEASE TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELVES...
...THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY.
...LET'S GO, SORA.
YES!

* AROUND 520KM (323 MILES)

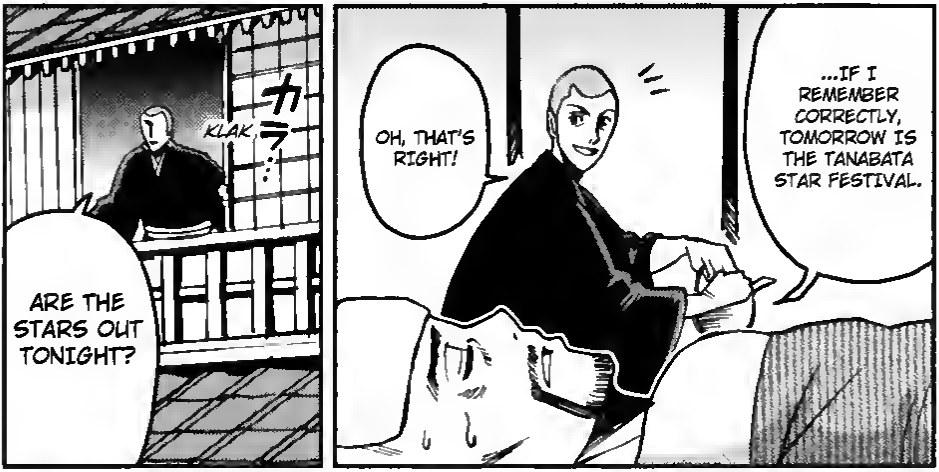
* HOKUROKU ROAD: A HIGHWAY CONNECTING THE SEVEN REGIONS OF WAKASA, ECHIZEN, KAGA, NOTO, KOSHINAKA, ECHIGO, AND SAWATARI.


I WAS CONTINUOUSLY HIT BY THE RAIN AND THE HEAT WAVE ALONG MY JOURNEY...
...AND IT HAS TAKEN A TOLL TO MY HEALTH.
KANMANJUJI
KISAGATA
FUKURA
SAKATA
TSURUOKA
MOUNT HAGURO
MOUNT GASSAN
MOUNT YUDONO
ATSUMI
THE BARRIER OF NEZU
PASSING THROUGH THE BARRIER OF NEZU, WE'RE INTO THE LAND OF ECHIGO...

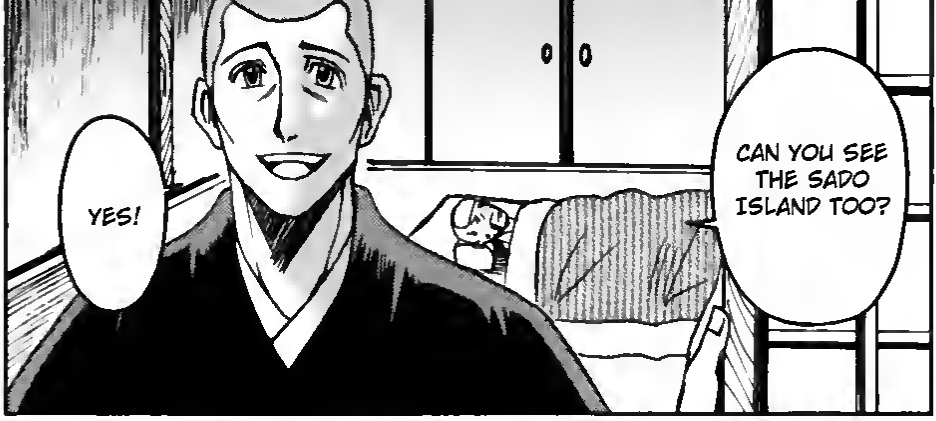


YES ...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
MASTER, I BROUGHT YOU SOME WATER.

YOU MUST BE EXHAUSTED FROM THE LONG JOURNEY.
YES...
SORA, YOU SHOULD BE CAREFUL TOO.

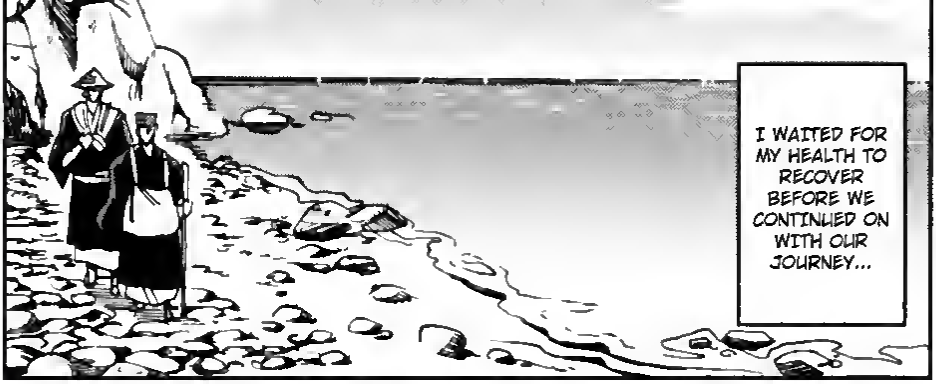

...IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, TOMORROW IS THE TANABATA STAR FESTIVAL.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT!
KLAK
ARE THE STARS OUT TONIGHT?

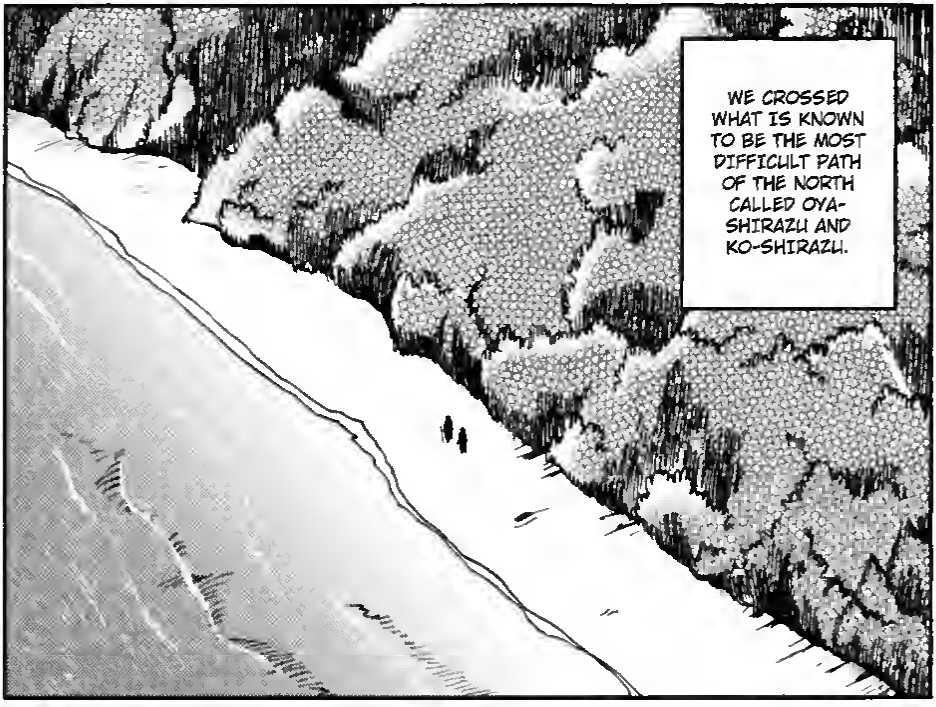
...AH, JUST AS I THOUGHT!
YOU CAN CLEARLY SEE THE MILKY WAY!


YES!
CAN YOU SEE THE SADO ISLAND TOO?

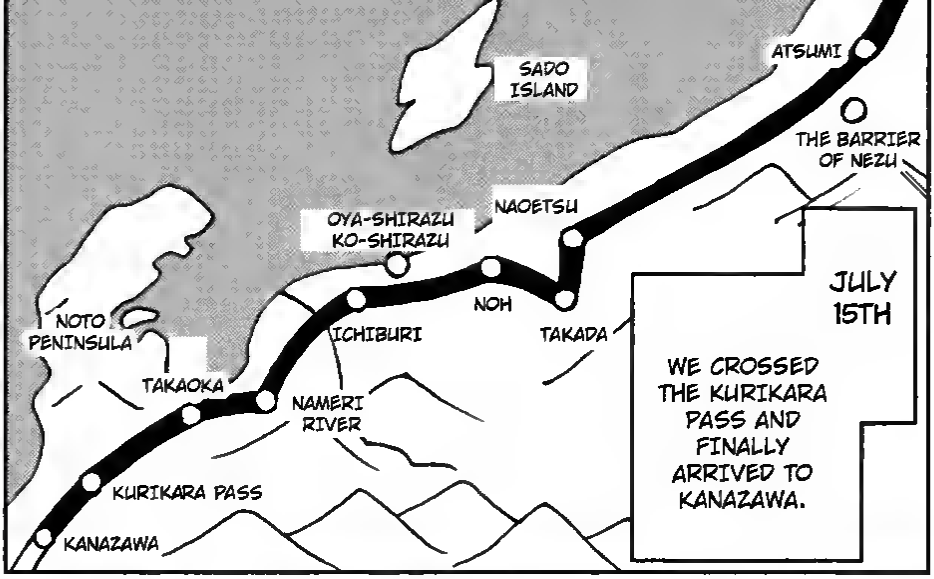
I SEE...

"HOW ROUGH A SEA! AND, STRETCHING OVER SADO ISLE, THE GALAXY..."
THE SADO ISLAND, KNOWN TO BE THE ISLAND FOR THE EXILED, CAN BE FOUND FAR BEYOND THE HARSH WAVES OF THE SEA OF JAPAN. BUT NOW, THE MILKY WAY OF THE NIGHT SKY STRETCHES OVER THE ISLAND.


I WAITED FOR MY HEALTH TO RECOVER BEFORE WE CONTINUED ON WITH OUR JOURNEY...


WE CROSSED WHAT IS KNOWN TO BE THE MOST DIFFICULT PATH OF THE NORTH CALLED OYA-SHIRAZU AND KO-SHIRAZU.

THAT NIGHT AT THE INN WE STAYED IN ICHIBURI, IT WAS UNUSUAL TO FIND THAT OUR ROOMS WERE RIGHT NEXT TO A HARLOT.


SADO ISLAND
ATSUMI
THE BARRIER OF NEZU
NAOETSU
OYA-SHIRAZU
KO-SHIRAZU
NOH
TAKADA
ICHIBURI
NOTO PENINSULA
TAKAOKA
NAMERI RIVER
KURIKARA PASS
KANAZAWA
JULY 15TH
WE CROSSED THE KURIKARA PASS AND FINALLY ARRIVED TO KANAZAWA.

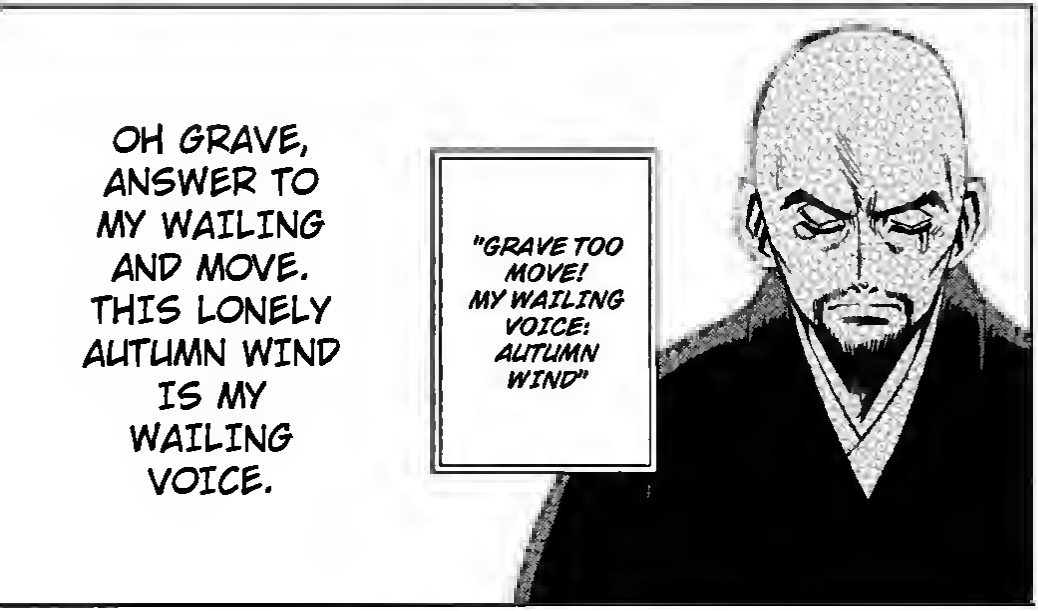
MASTER BASHO!!

HAVE YOU DECIDED WHERE TO STAY?
IF YOU WOULD LIKE, I CAN TAKE YOU TO AN INN I OFTEN STAY AT!
OH, THAT WOULD BE THANKFUL!

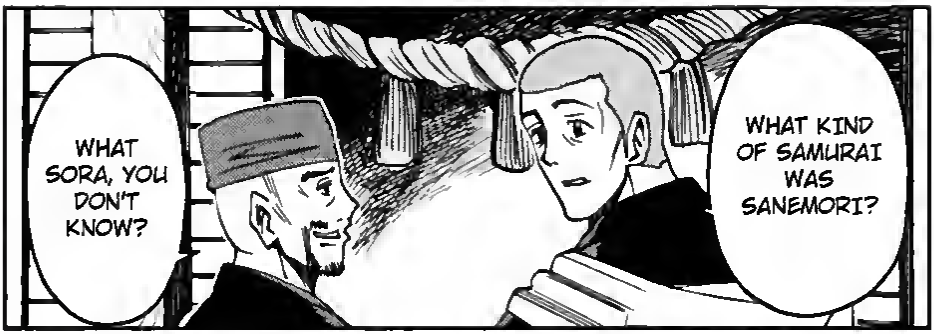
OH, KASHO! YOU WERE HERE TOO!
YES I JUST GOT HERE FROM OZAKA FOR BUSINESS...

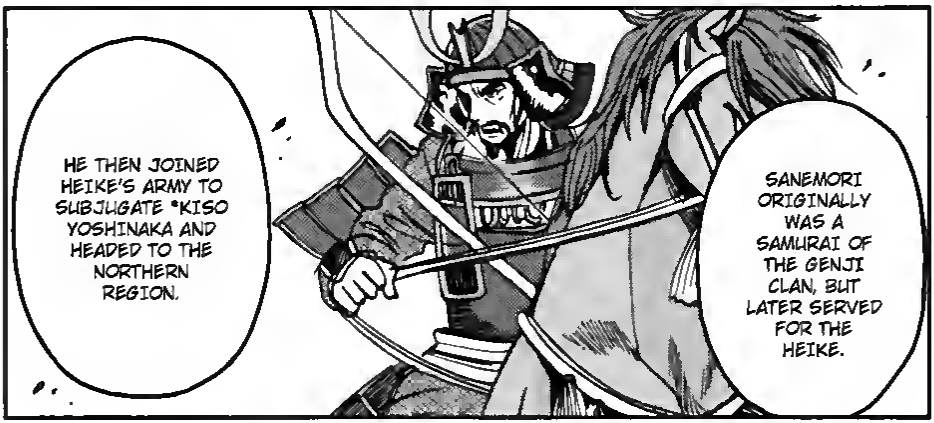
...WELL...
UH...
I BELIEVE ISSHO LIVES IN KANAZAWA.
HOW IS HE DOING RIGHT NOW?
THAT REMINDS ME...
HE WAS ALWAYS SO LIVELY!
THAT CAN'T BE...
HE PASSED AWAY LAST WINTER...
HE STILL HAD A LONG WAY TO GO...
DIED AT A YOUNG AGE OF 36, ISSHO KOSUGI WAS ESPECIALLY FOCUSED ON POETRY AMONG THE DISCIPLES.

MOURNING FOR ISSHO'S DEATH, I WROTE A VERSE IN HIS MEMORY.
ISSHO'S BROTHER FOUND OUT ABOUT MY VISIT AND DECIDED TO HAVE A POET'S GATHERING IN MEMORY OF HIS BROTHER.


OH GRAVE, ANSWER TO MY WAILING AND MOVE. THIS LONELY AUTUMN WIND IS MY WAILING VOICE.
"GRAVE TOO MOVE! MY WAILING VOICE: AUTUMN WIND"

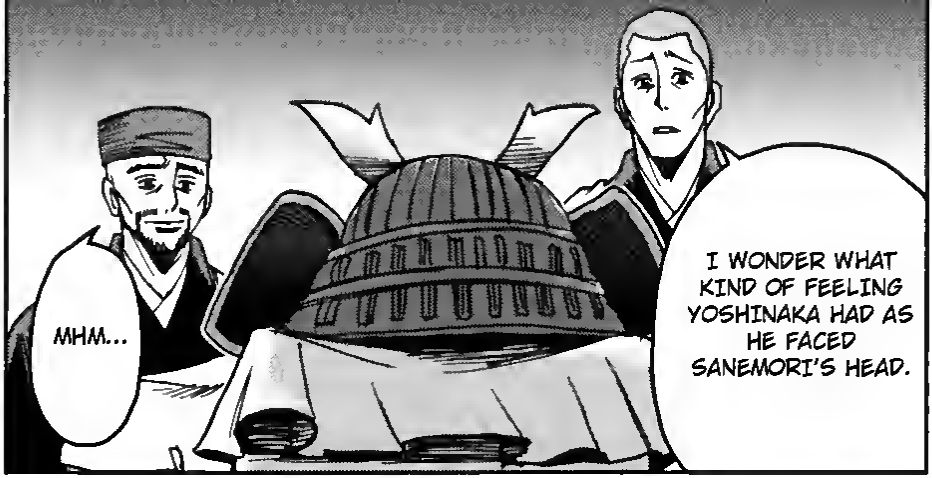
LET'S GO, MASTER.
ALL RIGHT...

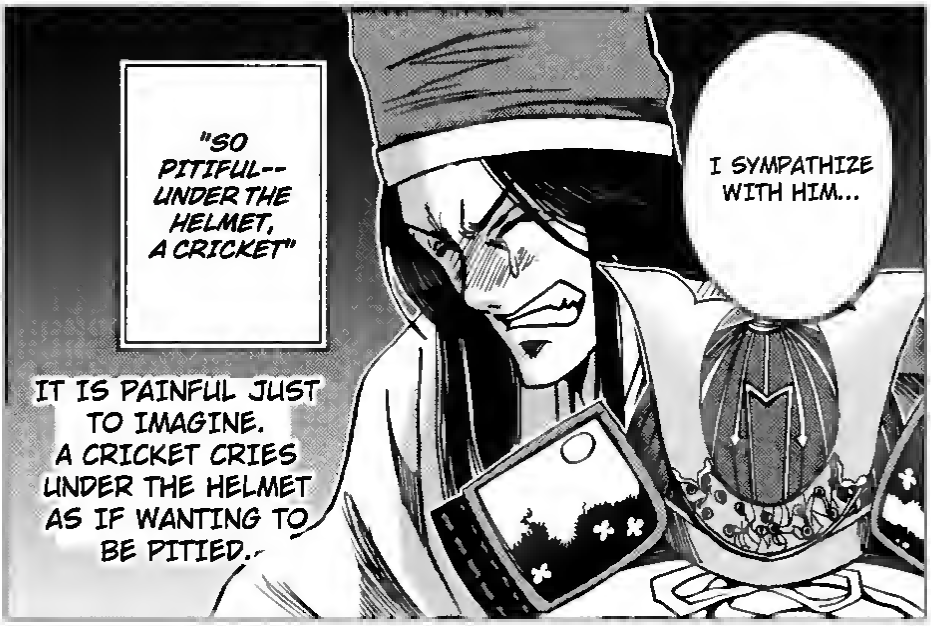


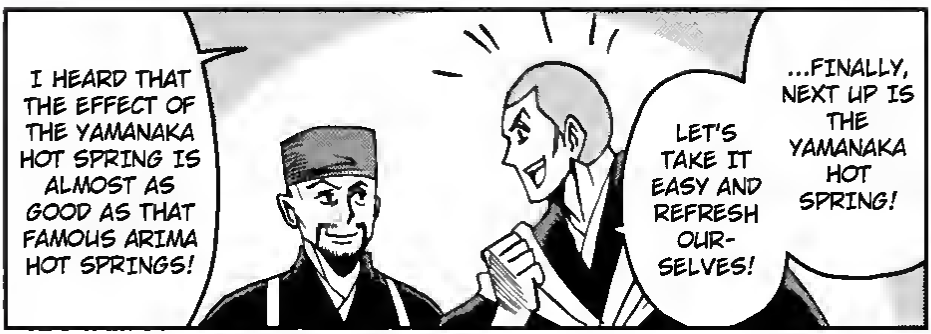

SANEMORI ORIGINALLY WAS A SAMURAI OF THE GENJI CLAN, BUT LATER SERVED FOR THE HEIKE.
HE THEN JOINED HEIKE'S ARMY TO SUBJUGATE *KISO YOSHINAKA AND HEADED TO THE NORTHERN REGION.

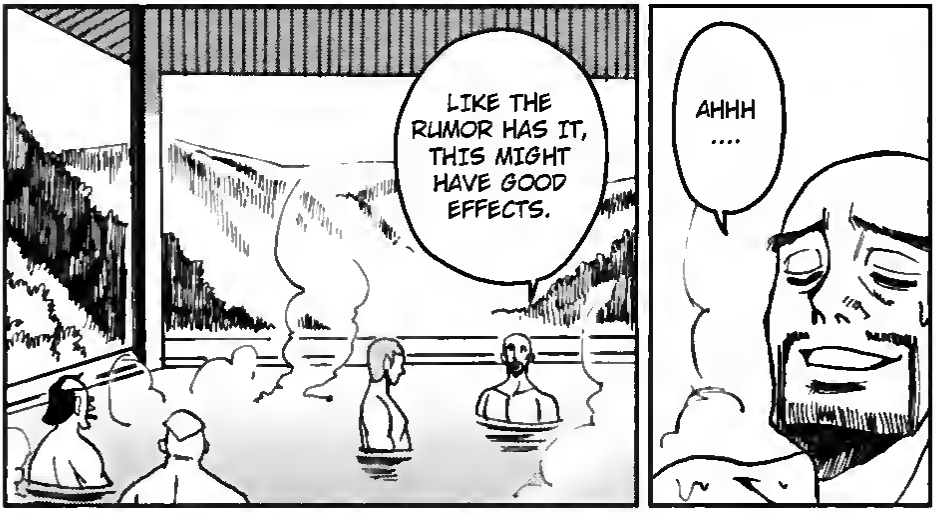
*KISO YOSHINAKA: SAMURAI BELONGING TO THE GENJI CLAN DURING THE LATE HEIAN PERIOD. HE IS THE COUSIN OF MINAMOTO-NO-YORITOMO.

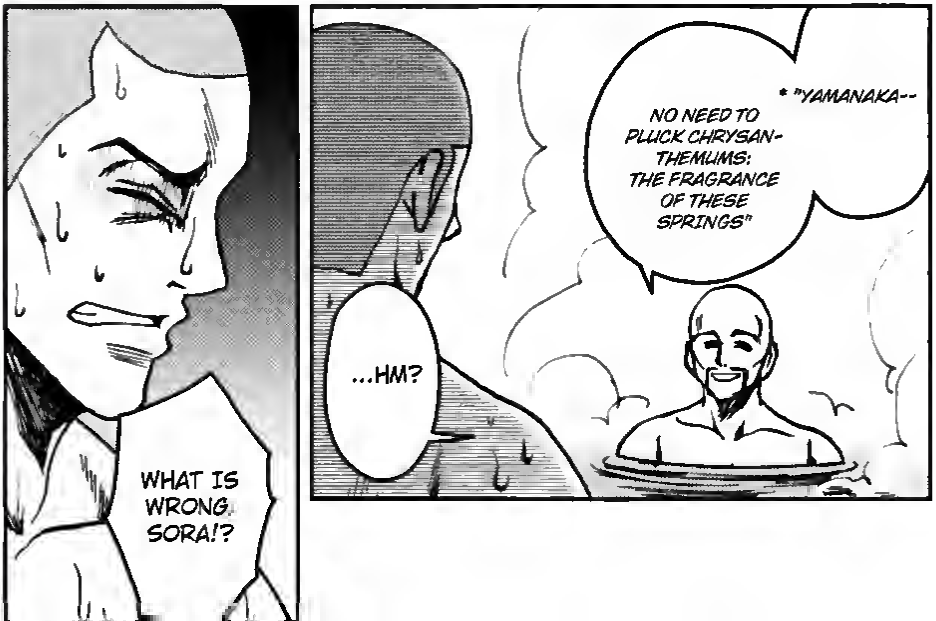
IT IS SAID THAT WHEN YOSHINAKA HAD HIS MEN WASH SANEMORI'S HEAD, GRAY HAIR APPEARED...
SANEMORI, WHO WAS 73 YEARS OLD, WENT TO THE BATTLEFIELD WITH HIS HAIR DYED BLACK.
HE PUT UP A SOLITARY STRUGGLE, BUT WAS EVENTUALLY KILLED.
YOSHINAKA MOURNED FOR HIS ONCE BENEFACTOR, SANEMORI'S DEATH...
...AND DEDICATED A NOTE TO THE SHRINE AS HE PRAYED FOR THE REPOSE OF SANEMORI'S SOUL.
AND THAT SANEMORI'S HELMET IS THIS.


I WONDER WHAT KIND OF FEELING YOSHINAKA HAD AS HE FACED SANEMORI'S HEAD.
MHM...

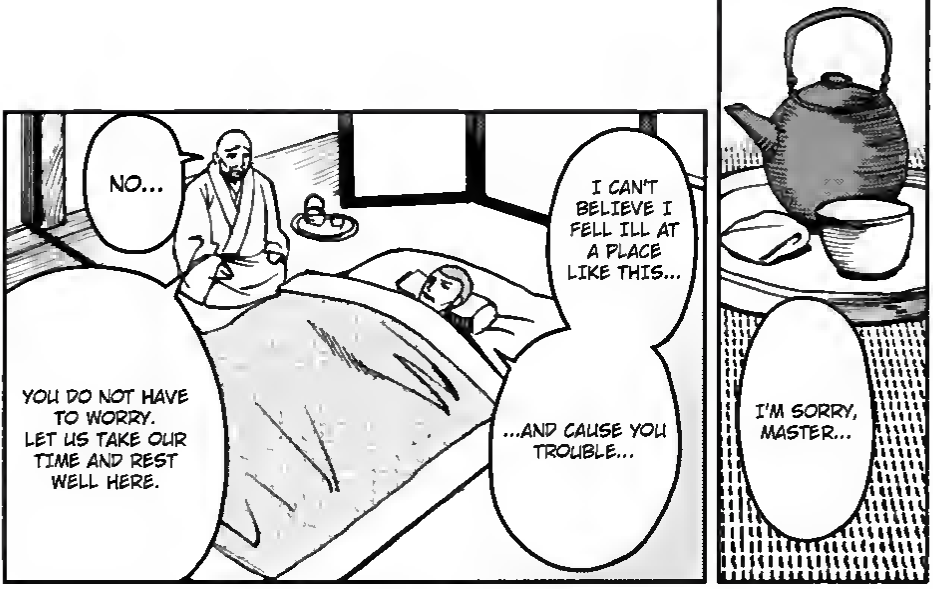

I SYMPATHIZE WITH HIM...
"SO PITIFUL-- UNDER THE HELMET, A CRICKET"
IT IS PAINFUL JUST TO IMAGINE. A CRICKET CRIES UNDER THE HELMET AS IF WANTING TO BE PITIED..

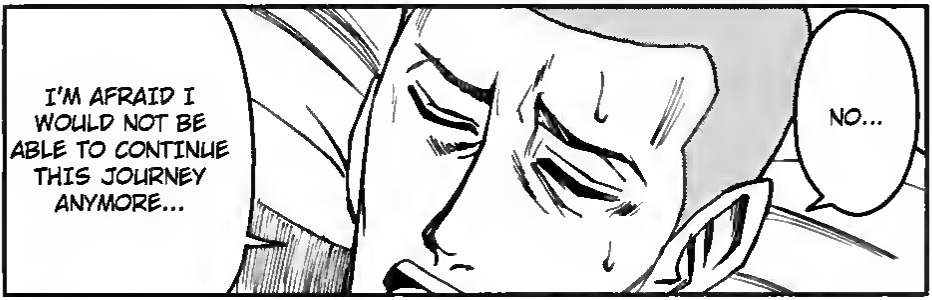

...FINALLY, NEXT UP IS THE YAMANAKA HOT SPRING!
LET'S TAKE IT EASY AND REFRESH OUR-SELVES!
I HEARD THAT THE EFFECT OF THE YAMANAKA HOT SPRING IS ALMOST AS GOOD AS THAT FAMOUS ARIMA HOT SPRINGS!

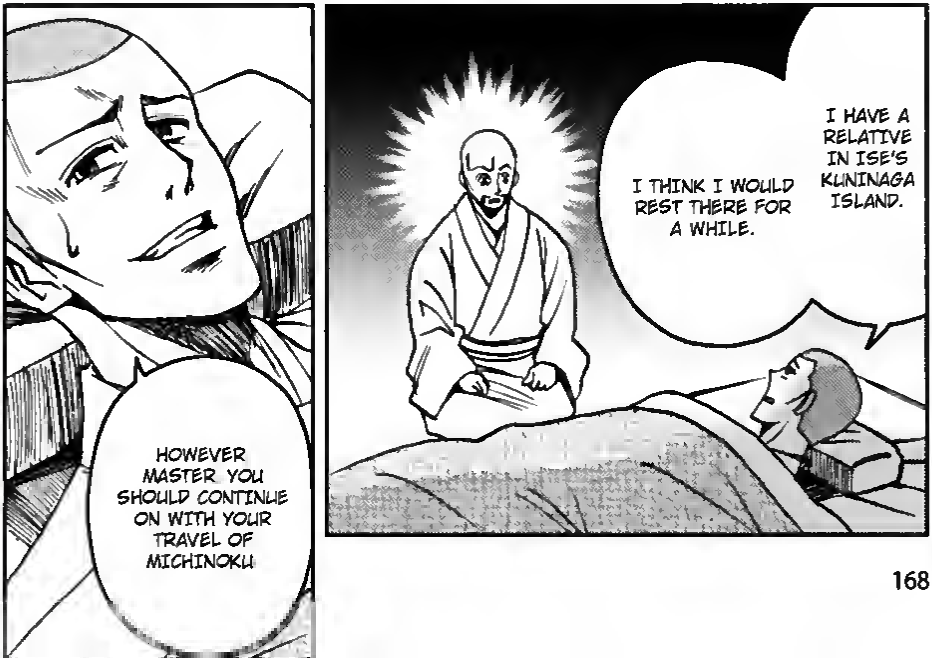


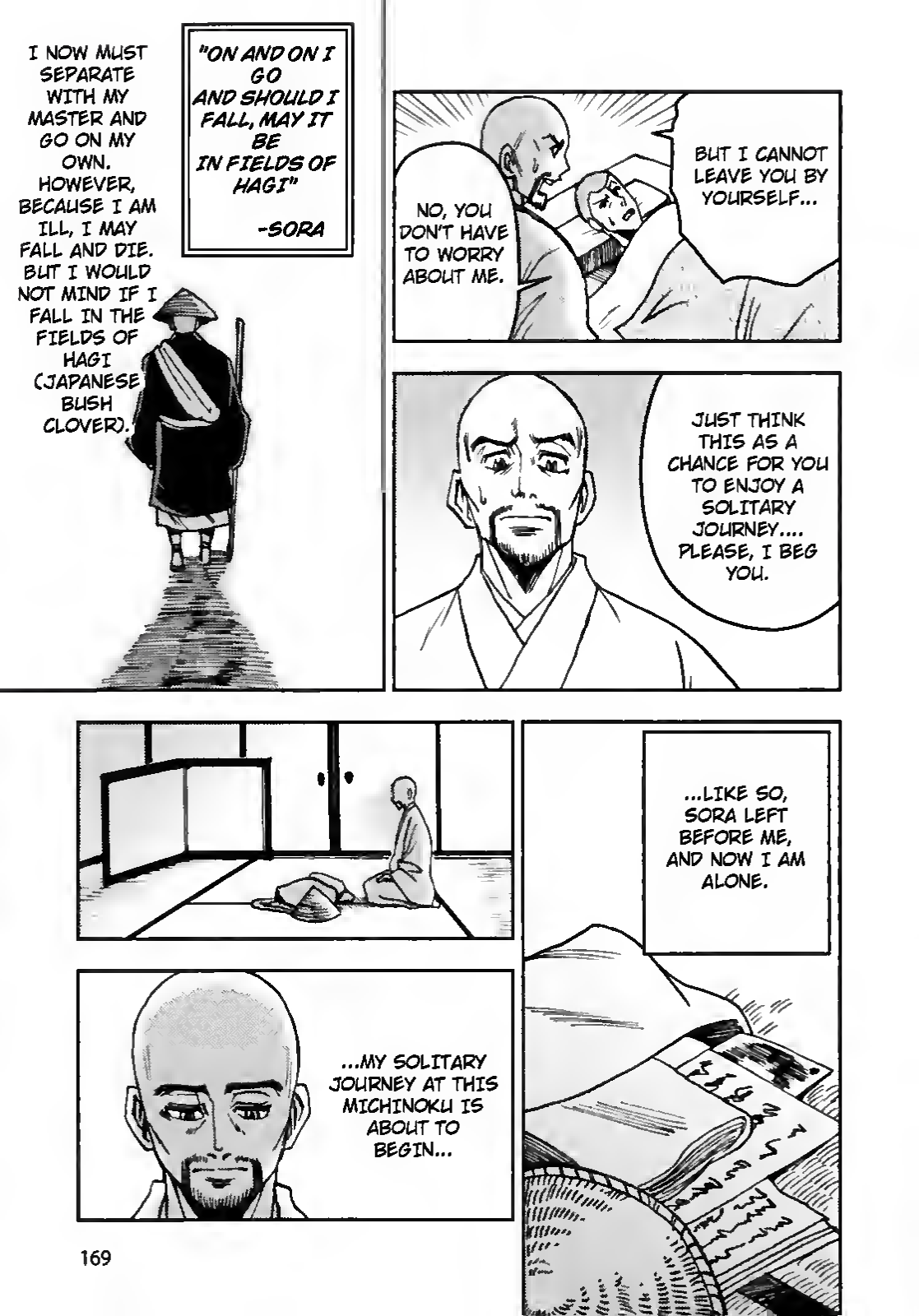


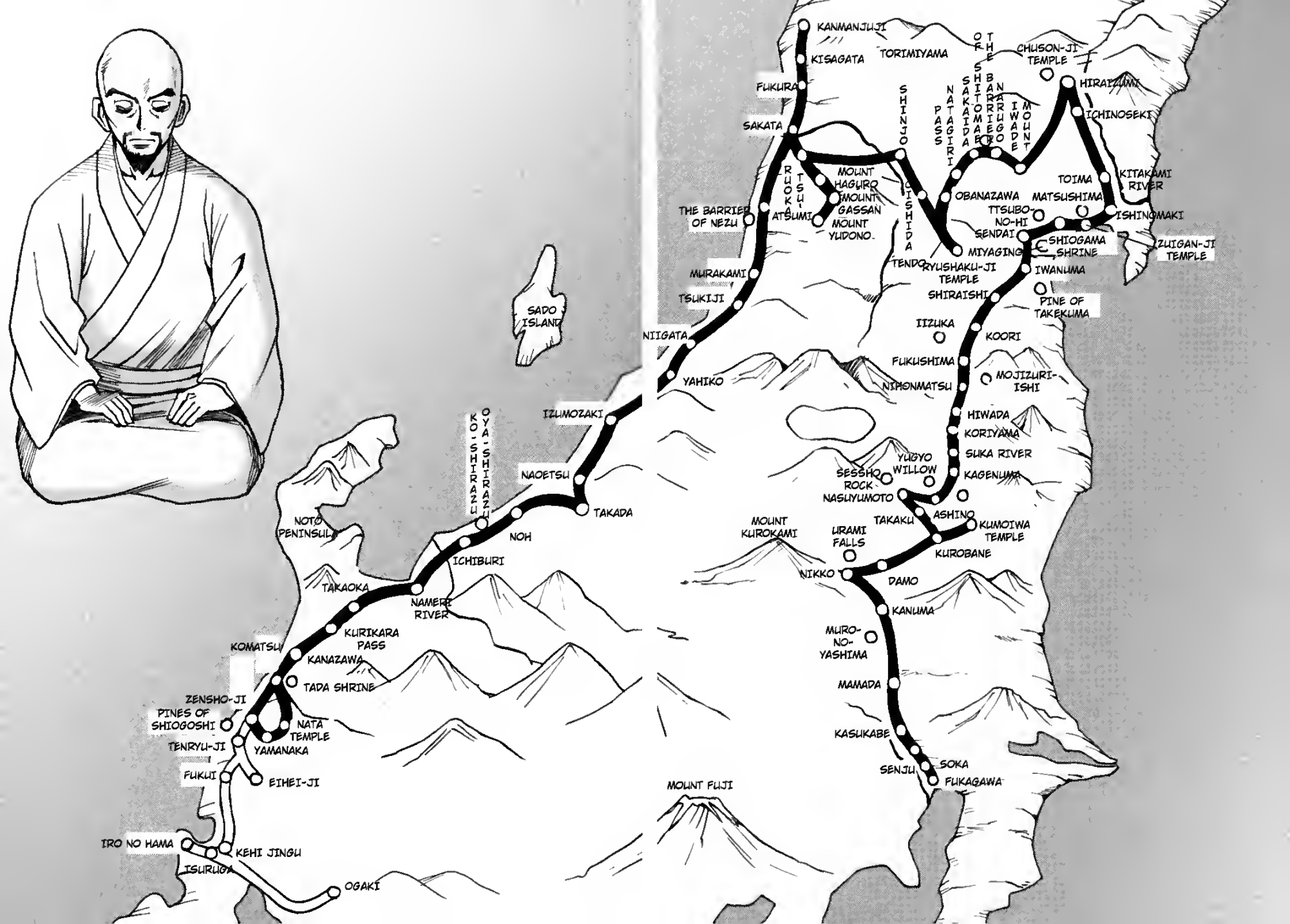
* YAMANAKA...: THE FRAGRANCE OF YAMANAKA'S SPRINGS IS SUPERIOR TO THE FRAGRANCE OF CHRYSANTHEMUMS, WHICH IS SAID TO GIVE YOU LONG LIFE.


I'M SORRY, MASTER...
NO...
YOU DO NOT HAVE TO WORRY. LET US TAKE OUR TIME AND REST WELL HERE.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I FELL ILL AT A PLACE LIKE THIS...
...AND CAUSE YOU TROUBLE...


NO...
I'M AFRAID I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO CONTINUE THIS JOURNEY ANYMORE...

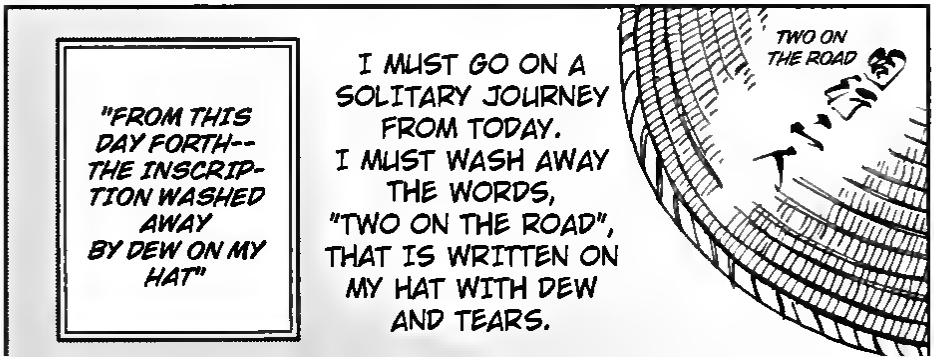

I HAVE A RELATIVE IN ISE'S KUNINAGA ISLAND.
I THINK I WOULD REST THERE FOR A WHILE.
HOWEVER MASTER YOU SHOULD CONTINUE ON WITH YOUR TRAVEL OF MICHINOKU


I NOW MUST SEPARATE WITH MY MASTER AND GO ON MY OWN. HOWEVER, BECAUSE I AM ILL, I MAY FALL AND DIE. BUT I WOULD NOT MIND IF I FALL IN THE FIELDS OF HAGI (JAPANESE BUSH CLOVER).
"ON AND ON I GO AND SHOULD I FALL, MAY IT BE IN FIELDS OF HAGI"
-SORA
NO, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ME.
BUT I CANNOT LEAVE YOU BY YOURSELF...
JUST THINK THIS AS A CHANCE FOR YOU TO ENJOY A SOLITARY JOURNEY.... PLEASE, I BEG YOU.
...LIKE SO, SORA LEFT BEFORE ME, AND NOW I AM ALONE.
...MY SOLITARY JOURNEY AT THIS MICHINOKU IS ABOUT TO BEGIN...


KANMANJUJI
KISAGATA
TORIMIYAMA
FUKURA
SAKATA
SHINJO
OF THE SHITOMAE BARRIER
SAKAIDA
NATAGIRI PASS
IWADE
MOUNT BANRIUGO
CHUSON-JI TEMPLE
HIRAIZUMI
ICHINOSEKI
KITAKAMI RIVER
RUOKA TSUI
MOUNT HAGURO
MOUNT GASSAN
MOUNT YUDONO
ATSUMI
THE BARRIER OF NEZU
ISHIDA
OBANAZAWA
TOIMA
MATSUSHIMA
TTSUBO-NO-HI
ISHINOMAKI
SENDAI
SHIOGAMA SHRINE
ZUIGAN-JI TEMPLE
MIYAGINO
TENDO
RYUSHAKU-JI TEMPLE
IWANUMA
MURAKAMI
TSUKIJI
SHIRAISHI
PINE OF TAKEKUMA
SADO ISLAND
NIIGATA
IIZUKA
KOORI
FUKUSHIMA
YAHIKO
NIHONMATSU
MOJIZURI-ISHI
HIWADA
KORIYAMA
SUKA RIVER
YUGYO WILLOW
SESSHO ROCK
KAGENUMA
NASUYUMOTO
TAKAKU
ASHINO
KUMOIWA TEMPLE
MOUNT KUROKAMI
URAMI FALLS
KUROBANE
NIKKO
DAMO
KANUMA
MURO-NO-YASHIMA
MAMADA
KASUKABE
SENJU
SOKA
FUKAGAWA
MOUNT FUJI
IZUMOZAKI
KO-SHIRAZU
OYA-SHIRAZU
NAOETSU
TAKADA
NOTO PENINSULA
NOH
ICHIBURI
TAKAOKA
NAMERI RIVER
KURIKARA PASS
KOMATSU
KANAZAWA
TADA SHRINE
ZENSHO-JI
PINES OF SHIOGOSHI
NATA TEMPLE
TENRYU-JI
YAMANAKA
FUKUI
EIHEI-JI
IRO NO HAMA
KEHI JINGU
ISURUGA
OGAKI

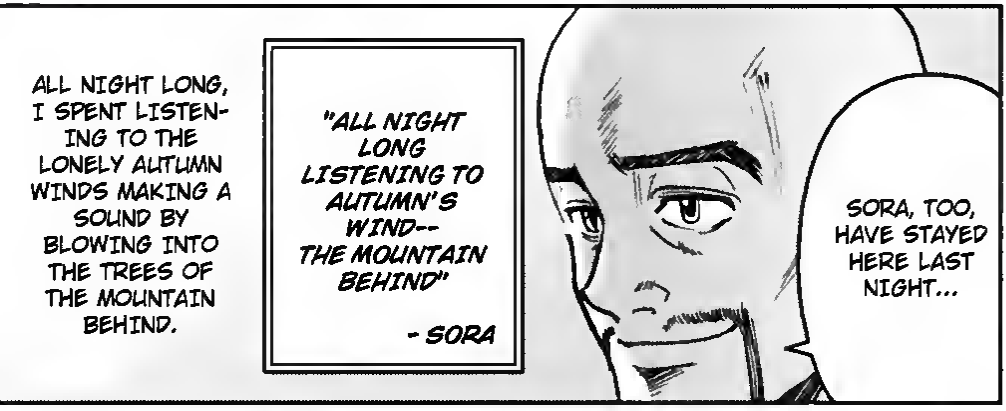
DOGYO-NININ (TWO ON THE ROAD)
TWO ON THE ROAD...
I HAVE COME A LONG WAY...

I MUST RETURN TO MY ORIGINAL SELF...
...NO I AM ALONE FROM TODAY.


"FROM THIS DAY FORTH-- THE INSCRIPTION WASHED AWAY BY DEW ON MY HAT"
I MUST GO ON A SOLITARY JOURNEY FROM TODAY. I MUST WASH AWAY THE WORDS, "TWO ON THE ROAD", THAT IS WRITTEN ON MY HAT WITH DEW AND TEARS.
TWO ON THE ROAD

HM? THIS IS SORA'S VERSE...

AFTER SEEING SORA OFF, I LEFT YAMANAKA AND STAYED AT A ZEN TEMPLE NAMED ZENSHO-JI BY THE CASTLE TOWN OF DAISHO-JI.


ALL NIGHT LONG, I SPENT LISTENING TO THE LONELY AUTUMN WINDS MAKING A SOUND BY BLOWING INTO THE TREES OF THE MOUNTAIN BEHIND.
"ALL NIGHT LONG LISTENING TO AUTUMN'S WIND-- THE MOUNTAIN BEHIND"
- SORA
SORA, TOO, HAVE STAYED HERE LAST NIGHT...

KLANK
カン
KLANK
カン
KLANK
カン

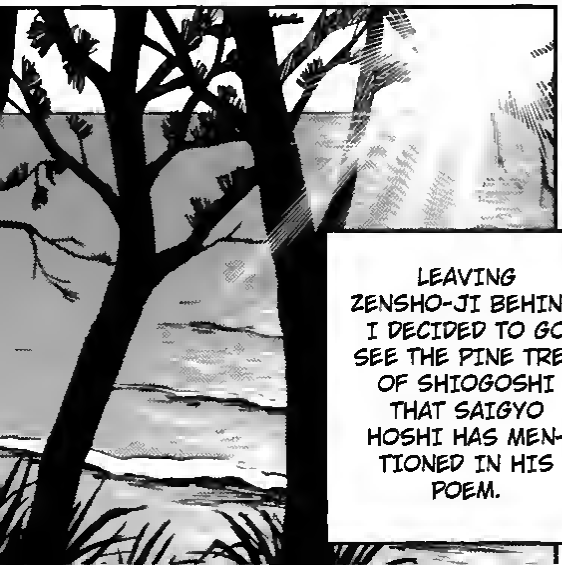
WSHHHHHHH
アアアアアアア
THAT NIGHT, I SLEPT WHILE LISTENING TO THE SAME SOUND OF THE AUTUMN WINDS THAT SORA HEARD.

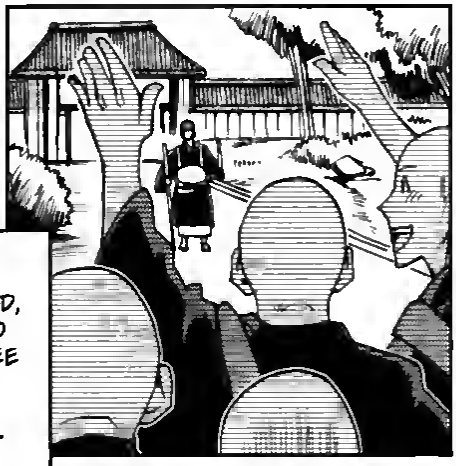
KLANK
KLANK
KLANK
KLANK
KLANK
I WANT TO GET TO THE LAND OF ECHIZEN BY TODAY...
I SHOULD LEAVE AS SOON AS I FINISH EATING...
IT'S TIME TO EAT...
YOU'RE MASTER BASHO MATSUO, RIGHT!?
AH!
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER
MASTER BASHO!!
MASTER!

I AM IN A HURRY, BUT I HAVE NO CHOICE...
WELL THEN ...

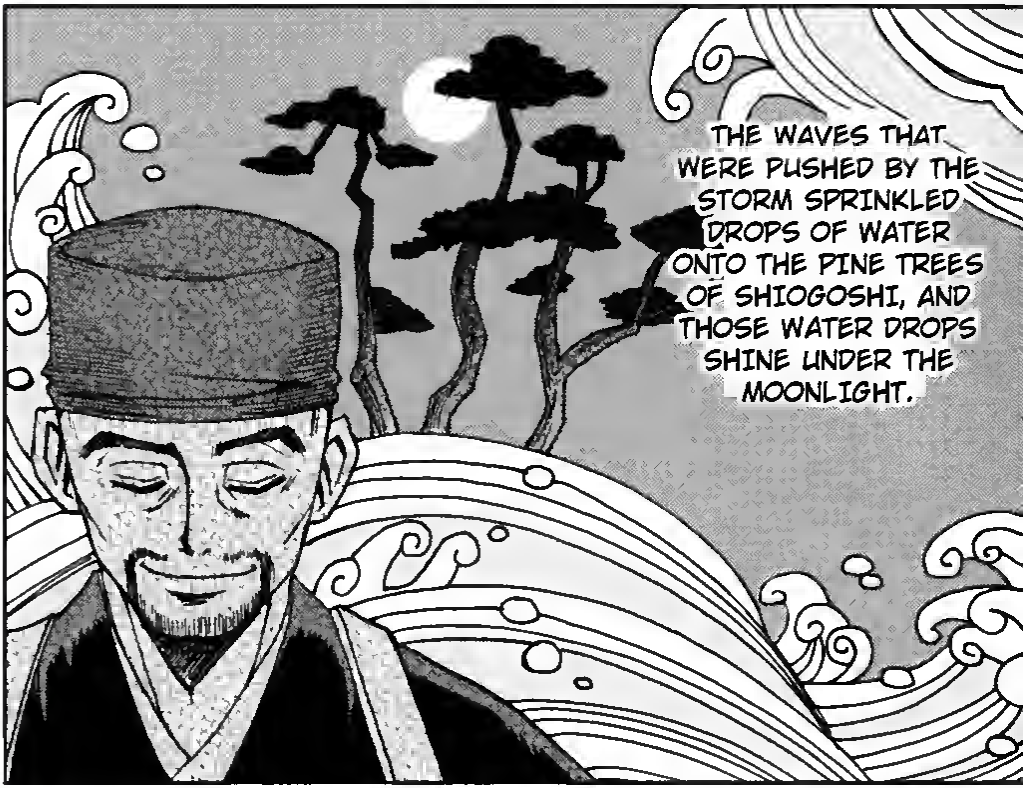
MASTER, PLEASE MAKE US A VERSE!
ZOOM

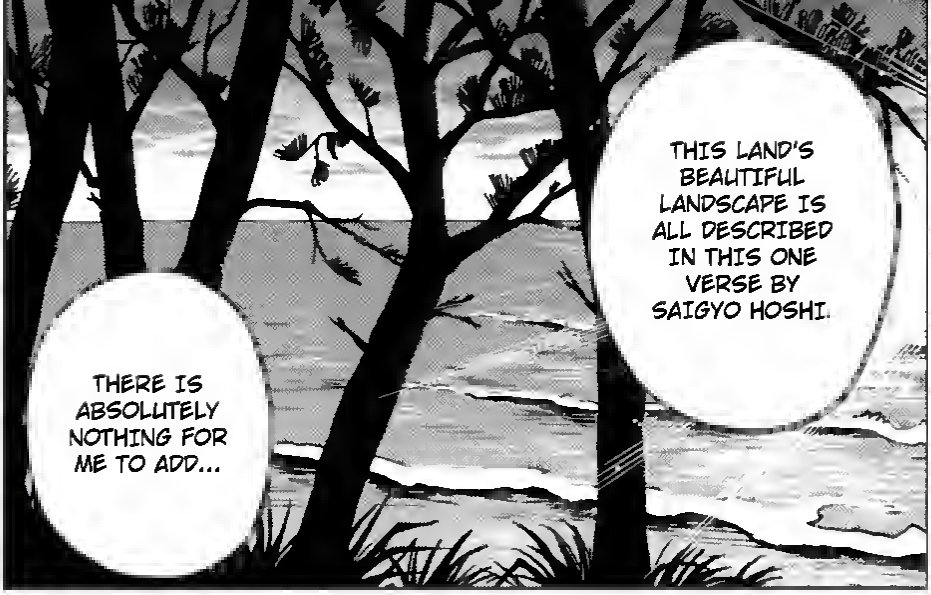
OUT OF GRATITUDE FOR THE NIGHT'S STAY, I WISH I CAN SWEEP THE FALLEN WILLOW LEAVES IN THE GARDEN BEFORE I DEPART.
"I WOULD SWEEP THE GARDEN BEFORE DEPARTING: IN THE TEMPLE, FALLING WILLOW


LEAVING ZENSHO-JI BEHIND, I DECIDED TO GO SEE THE PINE TREE OF SHIOGOSHI THAT SAIGYO HOSHI HAS MENTIONED IN HIS POEM.

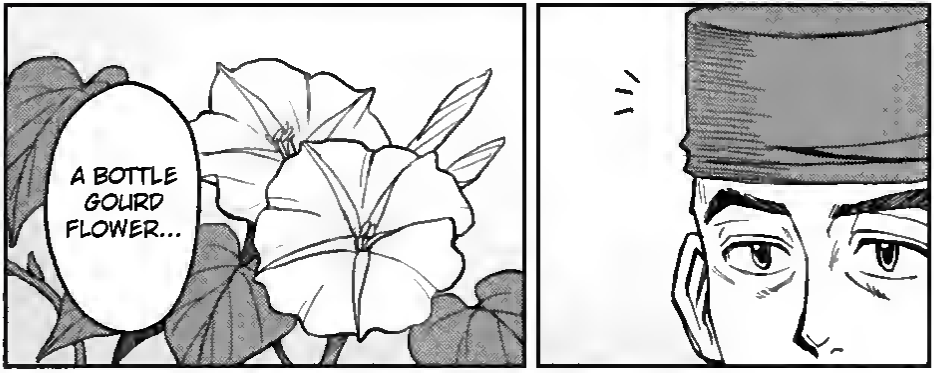


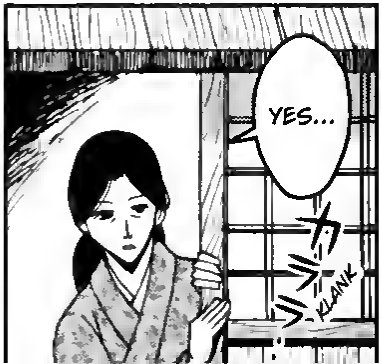
"ALL NIGHT LONG...
WAVES WERE HEAVED ACROSS BY THE STORM...
MOONLIGHT DRIPPING DOWN AMONG THE TIDE CROSS PINES"
WOOOSHH

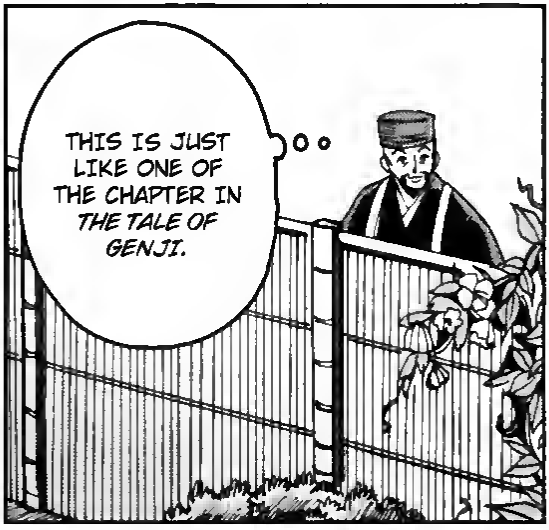

THE WAVES THAT WERE PUSHED BY THE STORM SPRINKLED DROPS OF WATER ONTO THE PINE TREES OF SHIOGOSHI, AND THOSE WATER DROPS SHINE UNDER THE MOONLIGHT.


THIS LAND'S BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPE IS ALL DESCRIBED IN THIS ONE VERSE BY SAIGYO HOSHI.
THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING FOR ME TO ADD...

MR. TOSAI?
YEAH, HE LIVES JUST BY THE OUTSKIRTS OF THIS TOWN.
IS THAT SO! THANK YOU VERY MUCH.







*INSHI: A RECLUSE; A HERMIT.

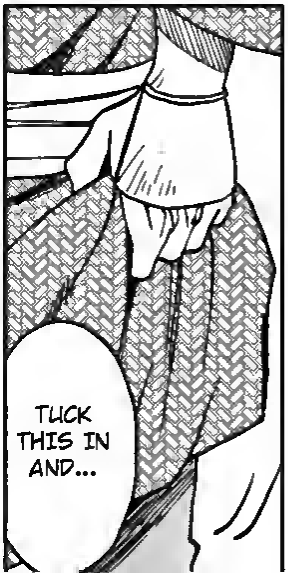
OH...
MY HUSBAND IS AWAY TO AN ACQUAIN-TANCE'S PLACE...
MY NAME IS BASHO MATSUO.
IS MR. TOSAI HOME?
SHE MUST BE MR. TOSAI'S WIFE.
I SEE...
THEN I WILL TRY DOING THAT.
IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE HIM, IT WOULD BE FASTER TO VISIT HIM OVER THERE.
I DO NOT KNOW WHEN HE WILL RETURN...
OH, MR. BASHO!
AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED OF MR. TOSAI...
...HIS WIFE SURE HAD A SURREAL ATMOSPHERE AROUND HER...

FOR THE NEXT TWO NIGHTS, I WAS UNDER HIS CARE AT HIS HOUSE...

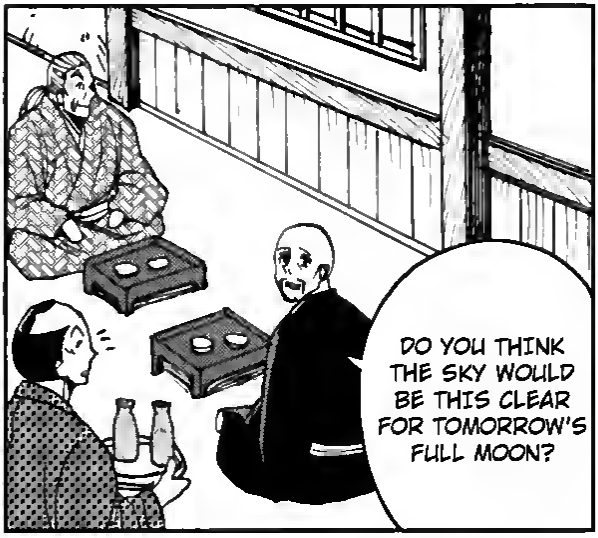
MR. TOSAI!
はっはっはっ HAHAHA
WE SURE DID GROW OLD!
IT'S BEEN 10 YEARS!!
NONETHE-LESS, I AM GLAD TO SEE YOU HERE!

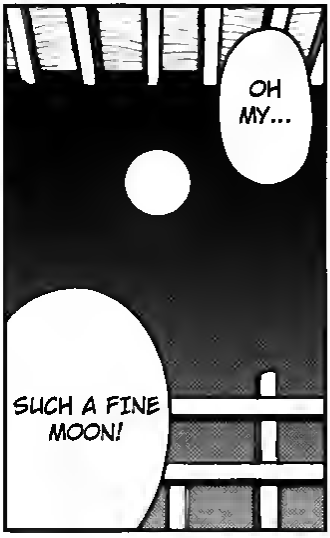
...WITH THAT SAID, WE DECIDED TO TRAVEL TO TSURUGA TOGETHER.
YOU MUST WATCH THE HARVEST MOON IN TSURUGA!

NOW IT'S EASY TO MOVE!
READY!
LET'S GO!

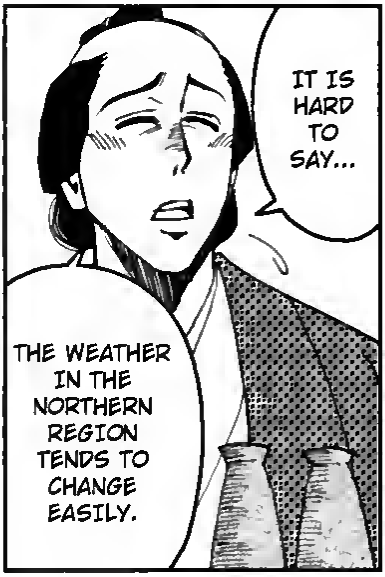

TUCK THIS IN AND...

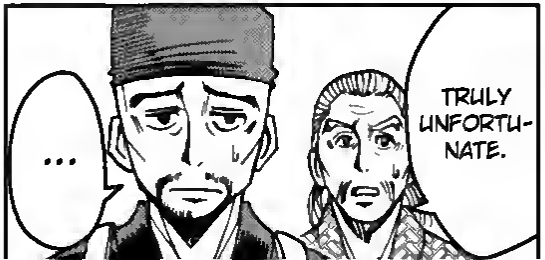
THE EVENING OF THE 14TH, WE ARRIVED AT TSURUGA'S PORT AND GOT AN INN.

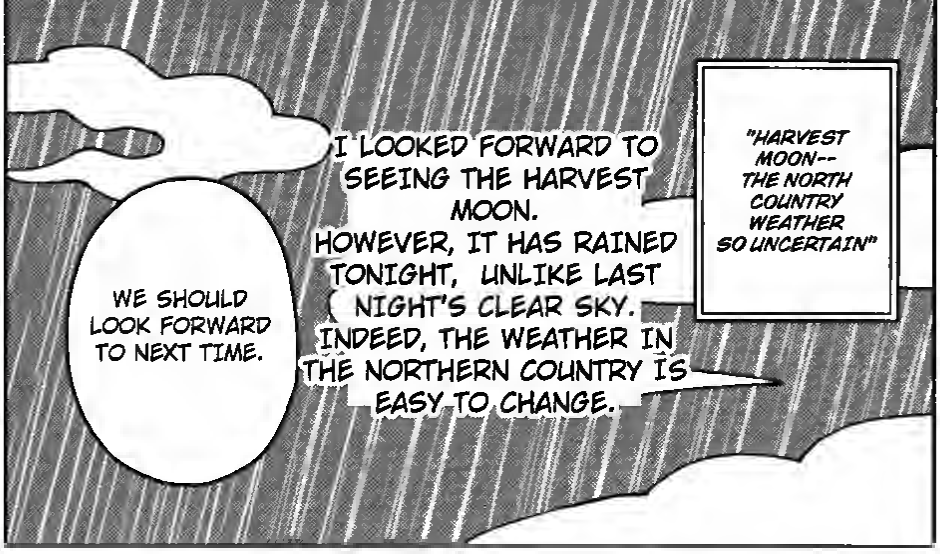

DO YOU THINK THE SKY WOULD BE THIS CLEAR FOR TOMORROW'S FULL MOON?


OH MY...
SUCH A FINE MOON!

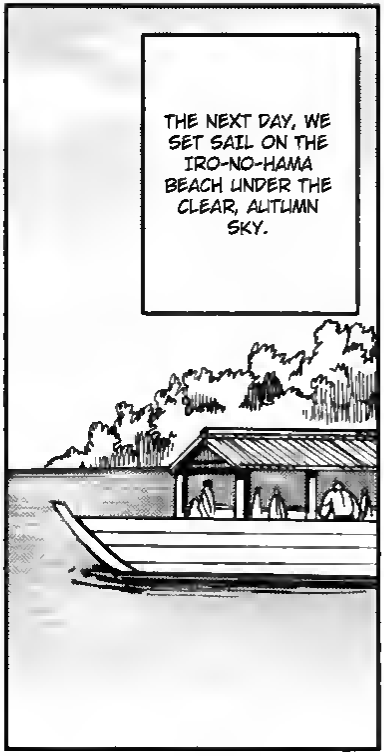
THE NEXT DAY WAS INDEED RAIN.
SSSHHHHHHHHH

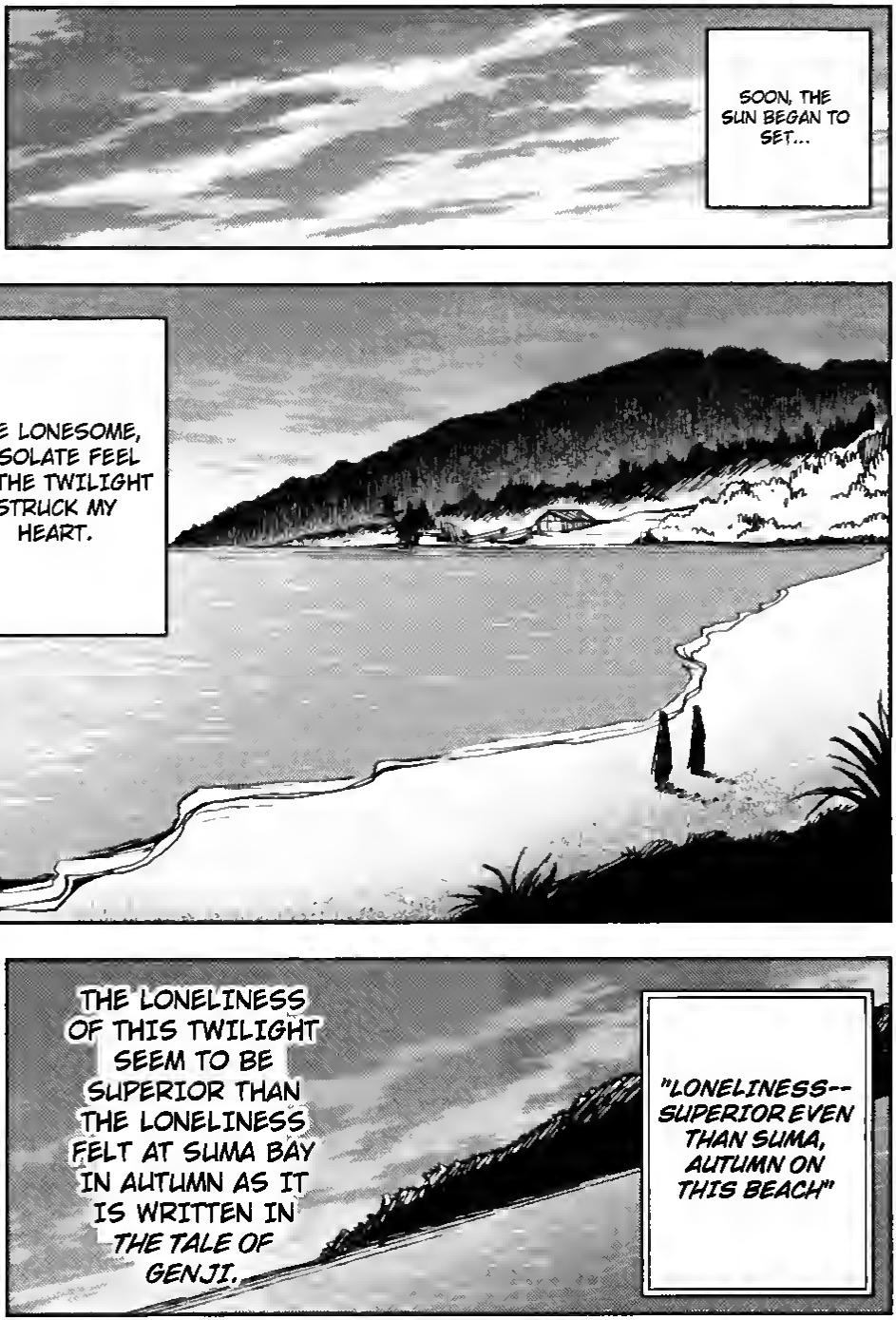

IT IS HARD TO SAY...
THE WEATHER IN THE NORTHERN REGION TENDS TO CHANGE EASILY.

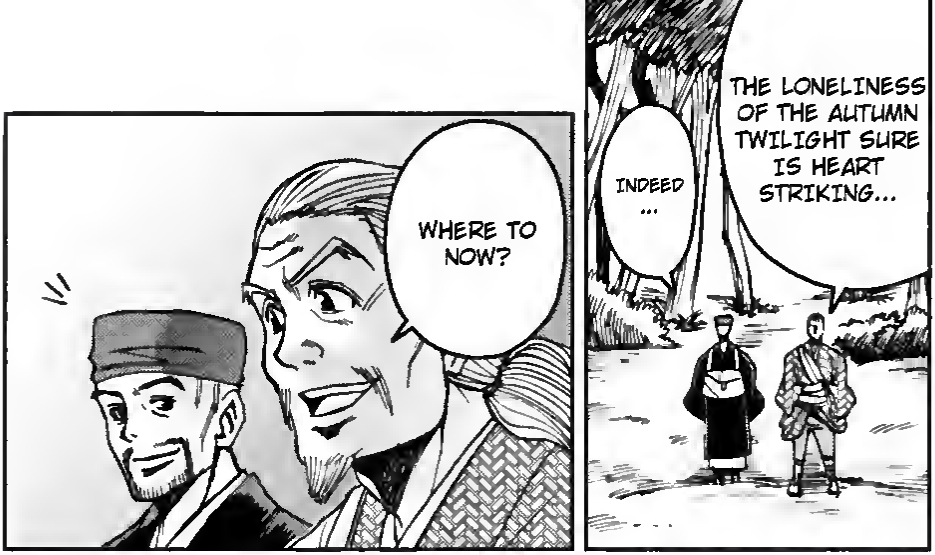

...
TRULY UNFORTU-NATE.

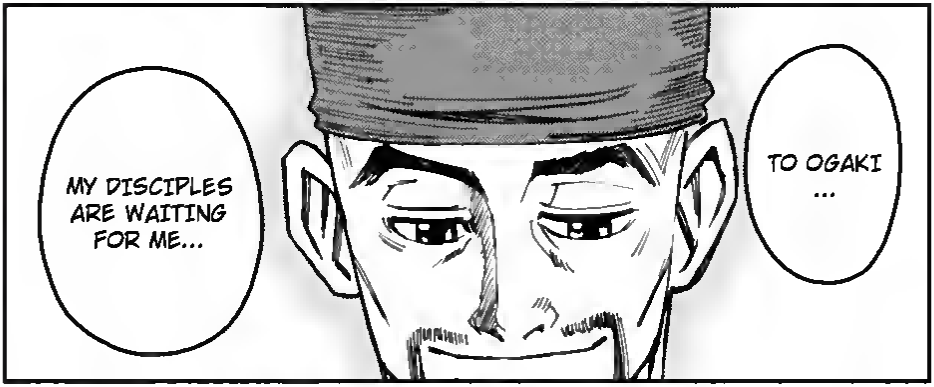

"HARVEST MOON-- THE NORTH COUNTRY WEATHER SO UNCERTAIN"
I LOOKED FORWARD TO SEEING THE HARVEST MOON. HOWEVER, IT HAS RAINED TONIGHT, UNLIKE LAST NIGHT'S CLEAR SKY. INDEED, THE WEATHER IN THE NORTHERN COUNTRY IS EASY TO CHANGE.
WE SHOULD LOOK FORWARD TO NEXT TIME.

AT THE BEACH, I LOOKED FOR THE LITTLE RED SHELLS THAT SAIGYO HOSHI RUMORED TO HAVE PICKED.


THE NEXT DAY, WE SET SAIL ON THE IRO-NO-HAMA BEACH UNDER THE CLEAR, AUTUMN SKY.


SOON, THE SUN BEGAN TO SET...
THE LONESOME, DESOLATE FEEL OF THE TWILIGHT STRUCK MY HEART.
THE LONELINESS OF THIS TWILIGHT SEEM TO BE SUPERIOR THAN THE LONELINESS FELT AT SUMA BAY IN AUTUMN AS IT IS WRITTEN IN *THE TALE OF GENJI.*
"LONELINESS-- SUPERIOR EVEN THAN SUMA, AUTUMN ON THIS BEACH"


THE LONELINESS OF THE AUTUMN TWILIGHT SURE IS HEART STRIKING...
INDEED ...
WHERE TO NOW?


TO OGAKI ...
MY DISCIPLES ARE WAITING FOR ME...

EVEN A PERSON LIKE YOU CAN START TO MISS PEOPLE AFTER WATCHING THIS SCENERY!
HAHAHA
はは
I GUESS SO.

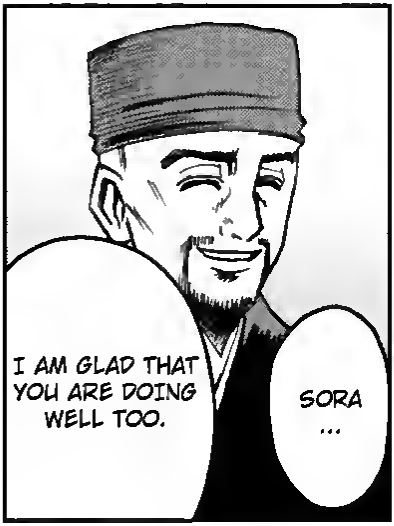
MAKE TRAVEL ONE'S HOME
旅を栖とす

MASTER!!

SORA!!
I WAS WAITING FOR YOU, MASTER!

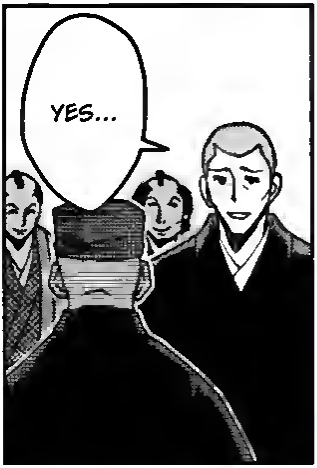
MASTER!
MASTER BASHO!!
THANK GOD YOU'RE UNHARMED!

MASTER.
HAHA
YOU'RE ACTING AS IF I'M BACK FROM THE DEAD.

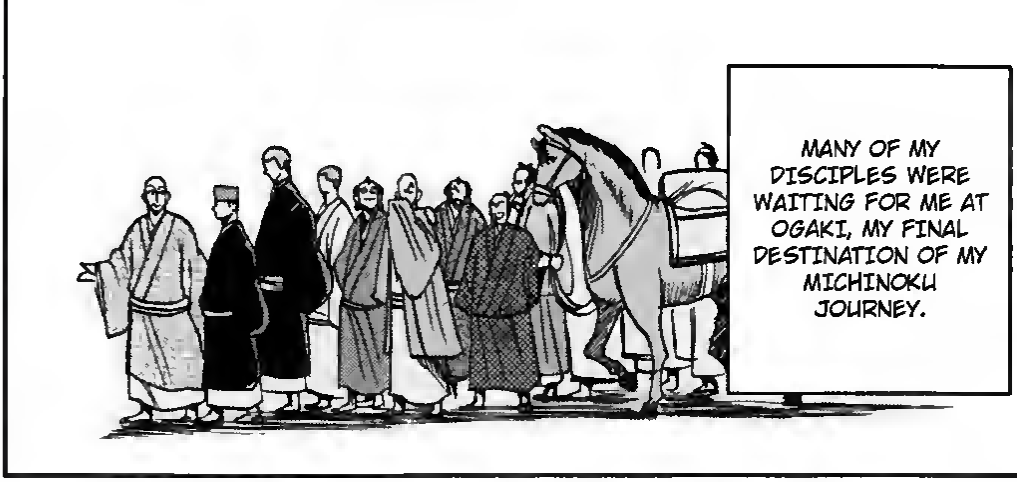

I AM GLAD THAT YOU ARE DOING WELL TOO.
SORA ...

I'VE TOLD YOU.
WE WERE ALL WORRIED ABOUT YOU.

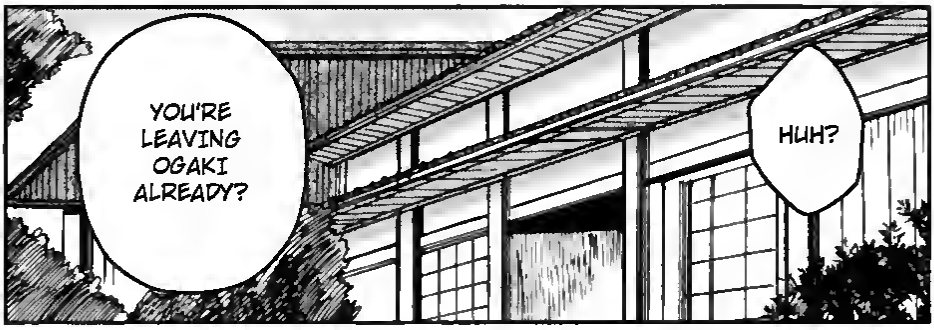
...WELL THEN, MASTER!

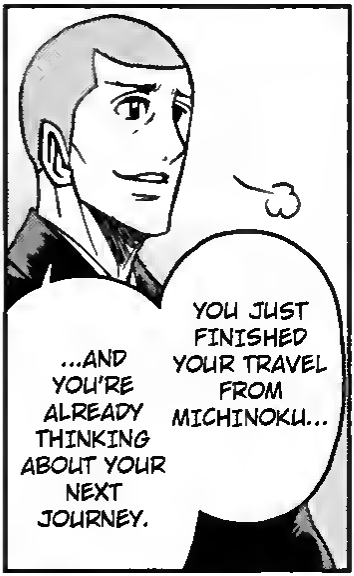

YES...

WE HAVE A BANQUET PREPARED FOR YOU. PLEASE COME ON OVER TO MY HOUSE!



* JOKO: JOKO KONDO. BASHO'S DISCIPLE WHO WAS A FORMER CLANSMAN OF OGAKI.





* RECONSTRUCTION CEREMONY: A CEREMONY HELD EVERY 20 YEARS DURING THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SHRINE WHERE THE WORSHIPPED DEITY IS MOVED TO A NEWLY BUILT SHRINE.

"PARTING AT FUTAMI, DIVIDING LIKE CLAM AND SHELLS, WE GO WITH THE FALL."
AN END TO ONE JOURNEY MARKS THE BEGINNING OF ANOTHER...
AFTER ALL, MY LIFE ITSELF IS A JOURNEY.
JUST LIKE THE DIFFICULTY OF DIVIDING THE CLAM AND ITS SHELLS, I WAS LOATH TO PART WHEN I SAID MY FAREWELLS.
I LEFT FOR THE FUTAMI BAY OF ISE, FEELING THE DESOLATION OF PARTING AND AUTUMN'S END.
おくのほそ道 完
THE NARROW ROAD TO THE DEEP NORTH
END